

PLAY WITH
PURPOSE

CHEERLEADING

COACH CHEERBOOK

FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO PROVIDING
THE BEST LEAGUE EXPERIENCE!

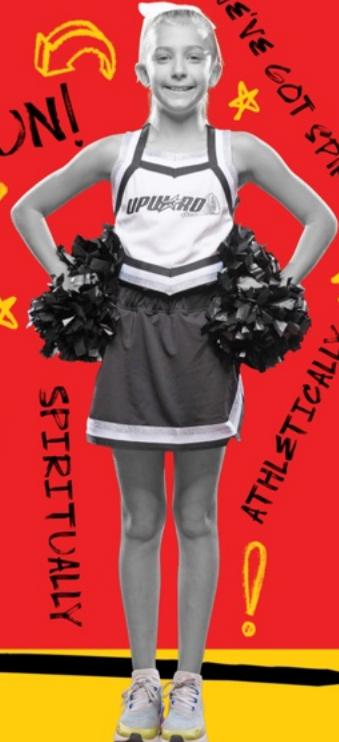
MENTALLY
CHEER WITH PURPOSE



EMOTIONALLY

CHEER LOUD!
HAVE FUN!

LET'S GO
UPWARD!



SPIRITUALLY

WE'VE GOT SPIRIT!
ATHLETICALLY



**FLAG FOOTBALL
CHEER
COACH
CHEERBOOK**

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SECTION 1

COACHING ESSENTIALS

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→ What You Do Matters

Thank you for coaching this season! You are about to make a difference in the lives of families for the next several weeks but don't worry. This league and Upward Sports provide the tools you will need for the journey, even if you are new to a sport.

Mark 10:45 - For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

→ Your Role in Sports Ministry

As a coach, you play a vital role in the sports ministry to cheerleaders and families. You are on the front lines of what takes place this season.

Sports ministry requires that the sport and ministry are both done with excellence as you give your best effort in teaching the sport and caring for people through ministry opportunities. Your league is not “just an Upward league” or “just a church league.” Sports ministry is your chance to provide the best youth sports experience in your community and demonstrate the gospel to the families you serve.



When you do the sport and ministry well, there is an area of overlap where sports ministry occurs.

There are ***Five Keys to Coaching*** in an Upward Sports league.

Whether you are a first-time coach, veteran coach, or somewhere in between on the coaching journey, there are five crucial things to do as an Upward Sports coach.

The following five key points will help you on your coaching journey.

→ **Key #1: Be Organized**

Parents want to see you value their time and are investing in their participant. This is demonstrated by how you conduct practice. Schedule at least 45 minutes on your calendar to prepare for practice each week.

The tools noted below can help you provide a great experience this season.

MYUPWARD.ORG – This is the primary tool for you as a coach. The league director will send you an invitation to access resources on MyUpward.org. After you accept the invitation and create a username and password, you should create an icon on the home screen of your mobile device for quick and easy access.

Some of the features you will find at your fingertips are outlined below.

- ◆ **Getting Started** includes how-to videos and other resources to help you this season.

- ◇ Video tutorial on MyUpward
- ◇ Referee handbook
- ◇ PDF practice plans*
- ◇ PDF devotion content*
- ◇ PDF Substitution and Star tracking forms*

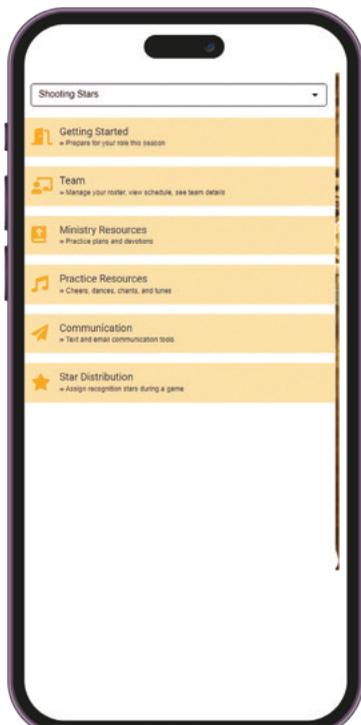
*Helpful if you prefer paper copies or have limited internet access.

- ◆ **Team** area helps you manage your roster and see participant information and the schedule for practices and game days. There is also a link to your team page.

- ◆ **Practice and Ministry Resources** provide a step-by-step outline for each practice including weekly devotion content, skills and drills, and video demonstrations for cheers, dances, chants,

- ◆ **Communication** is where you will find email and text capabilities, as well as attaching a link to the team page.

- ◆ **Star Distribution** helps you to manage game day stars. Assign stars and take notes by clicking the star next to each participant's name.



*Note: The coaches' tool can only be found through an invitation from your league director and is not listed in an app store.

OTHER TOOLS

- ◆ **Practice Devotions** – As you prepare for practice, take about ten minutes each week to review the Scouting Report at the beginning of the devotion so that you can present the devotion which ends with prayer.
- ◆ **Game Day Stars** – Use game day stars to highlight each player’s contributions made during the game each week. Stars can be tracked over the course of the season online or using the printed form in the Appendix.
- ◆ **Gospel Video** – Sent out from the league director to families to share a video version of the gospel message with them during the season.
- ◆ **Green Practice Stars** – Use these stars at practice to encourage participation in the practice devotion, scripture learning, or the goals your league has outlined for the devotion content.
- ◆ **Practice Cards** – The practice cards show the Bible verse associated with the weekly devotion. Depending on the devotion track, you will hand out cards every week or only at designated weeks noted in the devotion.
- ◆ **Practice Plans** – Use the practice plans found on MyUpward.org under the “Ministry Resources.” Practice plans include skills and drills along with the practice devotion. If you are an experienced coach creating your own practice plan, be sure to include the devotion content each week.

- ◆ **Season Celebration** – Celebrate the season with your team. Your league may have individual team parties or a league-wide celebration so that you can connect with families.
- ◆ **Team Page** – Share the team page with your team to give them access to the practice and game schedule. The team page also includes your contact information and a team roster. The team page link is available to send from the communication area of the mobile view of MyUpward.org.

Team Pages can be accessed on MyUpward.org through the “Team” tab. A link to the Team Page will be under the team name and division.

Share your team page from the communication area.



➔ Key #2: Lead the Practice Devotion

During practices, coaches use the devotion materials to lead a devotion, encourage discussion, and pray.

Before each devotion is a Scouting Report that gives coaches an inside look at the devotion for the week with detailed information about that week's topic.

After reviewing the scouting report review the devotion and make any notes before going to practice. Be patient with participants as learning more about Jesus is a lifelong pursuit and not accomplished in a single devotion.

Green practice stars and practice cards are items used to support the devotion. If you need help with presenting the devotion content, please let your league director or coach commissioner know.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

In our devotions this season, we'll be answering some big questions as we explore what it means to be made in the image of God. This means introducing some deep theological concepts in a kid-friendly way. As we explore what the Bible teaches about the image of God, we'll learn about who we are, how we ought to live, our relationship with God, and our relationships with other people.

In this first devotion, we'll talk about why God can help us understand who we really are. He created us, He loves us, He knows everything about us, and He has a special purpose for us. Psalm 139 is a beautiful poem that captures the nature of God's intimate knowledge of us and all-encompassing presence with us. The athletes on your team will be challenged to think about who they are and learn that they can trust God to help them understand who they are. This will help set the scene for the idea of being made in the image of God that we'll look at throughout the rest of the season.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Psalm 139:1-18; Luke 12:6-7. If you don't own a Bible, you can download the YouVersion Bible App for free.



ENCOURAGEMENT

On bibleproject.com, search for "Image of God Biblical Theme" and watch the video. This video provides an excellent overview of what our devotions will cover this season.



COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How would I answer the question, "Who am I?"

Bible Translation Note: All Scripture quotations in this devotion track are taken from the New Living Translation (NLT) of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

→ **Key #3: Communicate with Parents and Cheerleaders**

Parents on the team want you to communicate with them. Send a weekly email, text, or both to let parents know how the team is doing and remind them of upcoming events.

Parents and players watch how you respond at practices and games and how you lead the team. Your interactions influence the atmosphere of the league, if a family will return next season, and the league's and your ability to conduct ministry.

INTERACTING WITH CHEERLEADERS

This coaching opportunity may place you as someone's first-time coach. In sports ministry, you have the chance to impact someone for eternity.

Here are ten tips on interacting with your cheerleaders.

- ◆ Greet each cheerleader by name as they arrive.
- ◆ Always be mindful of speaking on a level they can understand.
- ◆ Explain the details of what you are teaching, demonstrate what you are teaching, have participants do it, and then apply it.
- ◆ Focus on one skill at a time as you teach so participants can learn each one thoroughly.
- ◆ Recognize differences in skill levels so that you can help each cheerleader improve.

- ◆ Be familiar with the devotion and allow time for discussion.
- ◆ Hold a ten to fifteen-minute meeting with parents at the end of the first practice to set expectations and answer questions.
- ◆ When distributing stars on game days, give specific reasons each star is earned. Don't underestimate the value of recognizing cheerleaders!

What about distracted and disruptive participants?

A challenge for coaches is what to do with distracted or disruptive participants. Here are four things to understand in these situations that will help.

1. Understand that children have short attention spans. Be patient.
2. Cheerleaders come into practice and, like coaches, are influenced by things that have already occurred during the day. Greet them by name to welcome them into a new environment, so they know you see them.
3. Maintain engagement by cutting down on lines and lectures. To do this, ask parents to help run a drill, so there are multiple stations.
4. Praise desired behavior right away, use the cheerleader's name, and let them know how it helps everyone. Other cheerleaders will recognize this and follow.

If undesirable behavior continues, address it with the cheerleader and parent so that the cheerleader doesn't disrupt a learning environment. Let the parent know that you need their help, as they may be able to offer insight into working with their cheerleader.

INTERACTING WITH PARENTS

Start the season by getting to know your cheerleaders' parents and families. Include parents in your first post-practice huddle.

Here are a few tips for interacting with parents:

- ◆ Introduce yourself to parents, share expectations, and explain why you are coaching.
- ◆ Share your contact information.
- ◆ Each week take time to have a conversation with one family.
- ◆ Encourage parents to have fun working on skills at home with their cheerleaders.
- ◆ Be ready to step into any spiritual conversation with parents and talk about what you teach during devotion time.
- ◆ Demonstrate care and concern for cheerleaders, so parents know you are looking out for their cheerleaders.
- ◆ Be organized and prepared for practice. Parents want to know you value their time.
- ◆ Communicate one time per week through email, text, or both. Keep it short and simple.

After you receive your roster, contact the parents right away. Families are eager to hear from you, and it cuts down on the number of calls and emails a league director has to spend time answering.

→ **Key #4: Teach the Sport**

Teaching the fundamentals of the sport allows players to put in place the building blocks for lifelong learning and enjoyment of the game. As players gain an understanding and work toward mastering the fundamentals you can then begin to add strategy and roles within a team.

As players learn and grow through the fundamentals any sport experience should also include learning sportsmanship, an understanding of healthy competition, and a growth mindset where players are learning with each opportunity to compound small improvements over time that lead to noticeable changes.

→ Key #5: Lead By Example

Being an Upward Sports Coach is a unique opportunity to not only teach the fundamentals of a sport but also share the gospel and create a positive environment for participants. This begins with your understanding of how to lead by example during practices and games.

Three Layers of Coaching

The three coaching layers are essential to understand the dynamics of coaching a team. They include a player, the team, and the coach.

- ◆ THE PLAYER - A coach will need to observe each player's skill level and teach accordingly. You may have a wide range of skill levels, with players who have experience and skill and some who have never played the sport. Work one-on-one with players and give them direction on individual skills to try at home. Celebrate success as they develop and be patient with their mistakes.
- ◆ THE TEAM - As you coach each individual, you must also bring the team together. In a team sport, players must learn how to work well with each other. The team concept changes as players become more mature, advance in age, and can focus on others and not just themselves. Small-sided scrimmages and in-game scenarios at practices can aid in developing the team concept. Helping them communicate with each other by using participants' names and showing them how to encourage each other will help them come together as a team.

- ◆ THE COACH - You must prepare for practice and games to coach a team. Coaches should be willing to invest the time it takes to be ready to lead. Review practice plans and think about backup plans so that you can move forward if something isn't working. Take time to check the Scouting Report section of the practice devotion and spend time praying for your team.

Create a Positive Culture

A positive culture is one of safety, learning, and fun. A team's attitude and mindset often mirror that of its coach. Use the beginning of the season to set a tone of positivity through the weeks ahead.

- ◆ Set expectations of behavior and communicate them with players and parents.
- ◆ Start and end each practice on time.
- ◆ Encourage players to support each other by cheering for teammates.
- ◆ View mistakes as teaching opportunities, not a chance to be critical at the moment.

Team Huddle

One practical way to create a positive team culture and teach communication is to establish a team huddle at the end of practice. Have players circle up and include the coach. The coach can talk about things done well in practice.

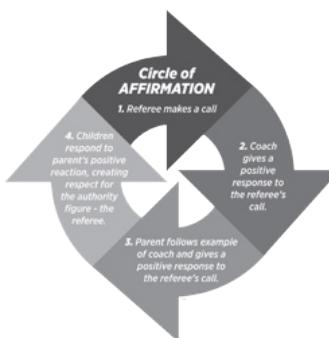
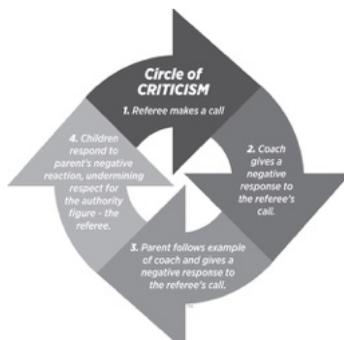
Next, have players look to the person on their right, use

their name, and offer something they saw their teammate do well in practice. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a chance to speak. The topic could be different at each practice, such as something the player would like to improve on their own, something they appreciate about the other player, or something they would like to see the team accomplish in the next game.

Circle of Affirmation

Choosing the right game day attitude is key to being an effective Upward Cheer Coach. Actions and reactions during games can either open or close the door to ministry. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple diagrams that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.

Coaches and referees work together as a unified team for everyone to have a great experience. Coaches stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation.



The Circle of Affirmation goes beyond the referee. A coach's affirmation of players inspires encouragement and praise from parents, family members and other players. Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game a better experience for everyone.

Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game day experience better for everyone.

Play with Purpose

The influence a coach has not only helps participants to develop as players but as people who will engage as members of a community, family, and eternity.

The resources provided are created with a player development model in mind that helps us to understand we are here to Play with Purpose.

DEVELOPMENT MODEL = M.A.S.S.

As an Upward Sports Coach, you play a major role in encouraging your participants mentally, athletically, spiritually and socially as they participate on your squad.

This approach is based on Luke 2:52: “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.”



MENTALLY

Mental development for young athletes is a byproduct of the weekly practices and games where cheerleaders participate. They grow in confidence, courage, decision-making, and cognitive self-regulation.

- ◆ **Confidence** - As participants learn and improve their skills and confidence will increase. Cheerleaders then gain the courage to attempt new skills and recognize that mistakes are a part of the experience that they can overcome.
- ◆ **Decision-Making** - The intricacies and complexities of sports, help train young athletes on making correct decisions. Through observation and repetition, cheerleaders improve their muscle memory and learn when and how to make individual and team decisions.
- ◆ **Cognitive self-regulation** - Through practice and repetition, cheerleaders learn to self-regulate emotions and gain focus. The attention span of a young athlete increases as they age. Through sports, they enter various experiences where they learn to narrow their focus from a broad range to a specific individual focus and team responsibilities in the pursuit of attaining goals.



ATHLETICALLY

Athletic development compounds through small improvements over time. Cheerleaders learn and grow in their sport to achieve long term growth

- ◆ **Exercise:** In a recent State of Play report, the Aspen Sports Institute reported only 24% of youth ages 6 to 17 engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, down from 30% a decade earlier. With many kids spending over 6 hours in front of screens each day (TVs, computers, phones/tablets), the desire to get out and be active is waning.

How can you tell if a child is getting proper exercise? Sweat. Sweat requires constant activity with little “downtime.” Practices should have drills that allow for continuous movement using various muscle groups. Avoid cheerleaders standing in lines when possible. Keep practice fast-paced and fun, allowing for water breaks and short periods of rest.

- ◆ **Physical Development:** Physical development has enormous benefits for children, including stronger bones and muscles, improved heart and brain health, and lowered risk of diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Participants may learn fundamental movements that allow them to run, jump, throw, catch, balance, and change direction. Basic moves will help participants enjoy a variety of sports and begin a path to physical literacy.
- ◆ **Fun:** The key to getting kids interested in physical activity is by making it fun. Sports do just that, provided the coaches in charge are focused on the development of the athlete. Practices should teach the game using fun and safe methods.



SPIRITUALLY

Spiritual growth is an essential part of sports ministry. You play a vital role in the spiritual development of cheerleaders on your team and help them discover a sense of self and a sense of purpose. This development happens in various ways.

- ◆ **Practice devotions** - By guiding discussion around the practice devotions each week, you plant seeds of discovery within the minds and hearts of young athletes. Remember to guide every practice devotion conversation back to the Gospel and what Jesus has done for us.
- ◆ **Relationships** - Jesus demonstrated the importance of taking an interest in people and relationships he had with them. Building relationships requires coaches to take a genuine interest in families and their cheerleaders. Talk about what participants are learning during devotions so parents can connect with their children on spiritual topics.
- ◆ **Your Example** - Be ready to step into opportunities God provides during practices, games, and your communications to demonstrate and share the gospel message.



SOCIALLY

Participants develop socially by learning how to work as a team, communicate, and serve others through a sport.

- ◆ **Teamwork:** Through team sports, children learn how to interact with peers and adults in positive ways. These include numerous opportunities for “selfless” behavior, focusing all mental and physical efforts towards the goals of the team. Participants learn how to navigate relationships, encourage others, and recover from mistakes.
- ◆ **Communication:** Cheerleaders learn how to communicate in complex social situations with teammates and competitors. This learning carries over to other areas of life, helping them communicate in school, at home, and in other environments.
- ◆ **Serving:** Serving others becomes a critical component for social development in team sports. Children learn to share, encourage teammates, and give their best effort to help the team and not just themselves.

→ Goals For The Season

The goal of our sports ministry is:

Success looks like:

Success in our sports ministry is measured by:

How were you coached as a child, and how has that influenced how you plan to coach?

How do you plan to grow spiritually and as a coach this season?

HEBREWS 12:1-2 READS:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer, and perfecter of our faith.

◆ NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

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PRACTICE

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➔ Invest in the team by preparing for practice

Your investment shows in the results each week. There are detailed practice plans for each week of the season found on MyUpward.org. These plans have been designed for each age group and include age-appropriate skill development and devotion material that progress through the season.

As the season continues, you may need to modify the plans based on what takes place in practices and the game. Be sure to always focus on the fundamentals of the sport. As you become more experienced, you may begin to include other resources for practice. Be sure to use the weekly devotion material as you design a practice.

Coaches are named as the top reason why parents and cheerleaders decide whether to return each season. Parents want to see organized and detailed practices.

→ Practice Breakdown

- ◆ **WELCOME AND GAMES** Start practice on time. Use this opening time early in the season to incorporate learning games and as the season progresses, give encouragement from the previous game. This will also be a time to quickly review what will be covered during the practice. (3-5 minutes)
- ◆ **WARM-UPS AND STRETCHING** (3-5 minutes)
- ◆ **REVIEW AND FUNDAMENTALS** - This time is used to review basic fundamentals of cheer, cheer tips, and previously learned material. (20 minutes)
- ◆ **PRACTICE DEVOTIONS** - Devotion time is where you continue ministry and share a lesson from the Bible. Take time to teach and listen. (5-7 minutes)
- ◆ **NEW MATERIAL** - You may incorporate cheer tips here as well. Incorporate new cheers, chants or a dance. Learning one routine (especially a dance) may stretch over a number of practices. It's also okay to modify these as you need for your specific squad. (20 minutes)
- ◆ **POST-PRACTICE MEETING** - Review the skills learned at practice, praise efforts, and encourage practice at home. Hand out practice cards and green practice stars and do things to create a positive team culture. (3 minutes)

Don't forget to connect with families after practice.

HERE IS A CHART THAT OUTLINES THE WEEKLY PRACTICE PLANS YOU CAN FIND ON MYUPWARD.ORG.

Practice	Practice Focus	Team Meeting	Cheer Tips	Review & Fundamentals
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know each other • Teach the fundamentals of cheerleading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the squad get to know each other by playing an icebreaker game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach guidelines for performing motions properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formations • Motions • Proper jump form
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review cheerleading fundamentals • Teach cheer calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintroduce the squad by playing another icebreaker game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper cheer/chant calling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion drills • Jumps • Chants
3 week of first game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing all learned material • Ensure squad is ready for first game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting ready for game day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing spirit • Using cheer voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheerleader Simon Says • Jumps • Chants and Cheers • Optional: Dance
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the game being cheered for • Reviewing learned material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go over the first game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When to use an offense or defense chant • When to use sport-specific cheers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumps • Chants/Cheers • Dance
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all learned material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play an icebreaker game or talk about the game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review cheer tips learned and answer any questions cheerleaders have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chants • Cheers • Dance
6-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss practice focus • Answer questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review cheer tips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to teach chants, cheers, and dances (included in practice plans)

→ Welcome and Games

Always welcome your cheerleaders by name as they arrive. Prepare a fun warm-up routine where they move and do motions as they count to a beat. This is an activity you may need to lead so cheerleaders get the hang of your warm-up routine.

ICE BREAKERS

Use these activities as part of the welcome time at your first two or three practices as you get to know your squad.

- ◆ **Line Up** - Divide the squad into two groups which will compete against each other to complete the challenge. Challenges could be lining up according to birthdays, alphabetically by first name or last name, age, or other criteria. Then try the same challenges without talking.
- ◆ **Name Game** (*Equipment needed: Five poms*) - Have cheerleaders stand in a circle and tell everyone their name. Next have them create a pattern by throwing a pom. Each cheerleader has to say the name of the person to whom they are throwing the pom prior to throwing it. The pom must be thrown to every person in the circle one time. The last person to receive the pom will throw it back to whoever began the pattern. Once the pattern is established, try speeding it up and see how quickly you can complete the pattern while still saying the names prior to throwing the pom.
- ◆ **Shoe Game** - Have everyone take off their shoes and put them in a pile in the middle of the room. Mix the shoes up. Divide the cheerleaders into two groups. See which group

can find their shoes and put them on first. When they have their shoes on, the team done first must quickly sit on the floor.

➔ **Cheerleading Fundamentals**

Being prepared for practice is imperative. You will need to not only know what to teach, but how to teach it. In the following pages, you will find specific skills to aid you as you prepare. Refer to MyUpward.org for visual demonstrations of each of the items covered in this section.

WARM-UPS AND STRETCHING

Warm-up exercises and stretching are necessary before any sports activity. Prior to each practice, use the following guidelines to lead your squad:

- ◆ Choose fun music from your coach's practice resources at MyUpward.org, or select a song of your choice and choreograph your own warm-up routine.
- ◆ Warm-up first and then follow with stretches.
- ◆ Play a fun game with commands and stay in motion. Have a cheerleader help you lead.
- ◆ As the season progresses, consider warming up with a jump circle. Have the squad form a large circle and have cheerleaders, one at a time, choose a jump for the squad to perform. Go around until each cheerleader has picked a jump. Jumps may be repeated.

Here are some warm-up activities that you can use. Add music, move to the beat, and create a warm-up activity you will use at start of each practice.

- ◆ **Arm circles:** Hold arms out in a T-motion and circle them 10-20 times.
- ◆ **High Knees:** With hands in front and waist high, lift knees up and alternate between knees. Vary speed as desired. 10-20 times.
- ◆ **Hops:** These can be done in one spot or moving forward. They can be done on one foot or both feet 10-20 times.
- ◆ **Jumping jacks:** 20-30
- ◆ **Log Step:** With both feet on one side of an imaginary log, high step sideways with one foot and then the other to cross over the log. Vary speed and repeat 10-15 times.
- ◆ **Lunges:** From a standing position, large step forward while keeping the back foot in place without the knee touching the ground. 10-20 times.
- ◆ **Push-ups:** 5-15 allowing as needed for a modified version with knees on the ground.
- ◆ **Running:** One minute around the room. If you have limited space, run in place and change the pace.
- ◆ **Shoulder circles:** With arms by your side, lift your shoulders and take them back down, creating a circular motion 10-20 times.

- ◆ **Side lunge:** Feet wider than shoulder width apart, keep one leg straight while the other bends into a squat position. Keep your back flat, chest up and rear out behind you. Alternate sides. 10-20 times.
- ◆ **Trunk twists:** From a standing position, twist back and forth 10-20 times to loosen the back.

Stretching is a vital part of cheerleading because good flexibility helps prevent muscle injuries. Stretching should be done after warm-up activities and before every practice and game. Below are some stretches you can perform.

- ◆ **Neck Stretch:** Sit or stand with arms by your side. Tilt head to the right and hold for eight seconds, then tilt head to the left and hold for eight seconds.
- ◆ **Triceps Stretch:** Bring one arm up beside your head, bending it at the elbow while reaching across with the other arm and hold. Repeat using other arm.
- ◆ **Biceps Stretch:** Reach one arm out straight in front of you with palm facing up. With the other hand gently push down until you feel a slight stretch in your bicep.
- ◆ **Shoulder Stretch:** Reach one arm across your chest, holding it at the elbow with opposite hand. Reverse.
- ◆ **Hug:** Reach as far as you can and wrap your arms around your chest giving yourself a hug.

- ◆ **X Stretch:** With feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart, stretch your arms and hands up and out, forming an X with your body. Reach high and stand on your tip-toes.
- ◆ **Quadriceps Stretch:** Support yourself against a wall or stationary object. Pull one heel up behind your body and hold. Repeat with other heel.
- ◆ **Hamstring Stretch:** Sit on the floor with right leg straight out in front. Bend left leg and cross it over the right one. Pull the left knee across your body toward opposite shoulder. Reverse.
- ◆ **Pike Stretch:** Sitting with feet straight in front of you and together, put both hands straight up above your head and then slowly bend forward to reach your toes.
- ◆ **Calf-Muscle Stretch:** Lean toward and support yourself against a wall while keeping your leg straight. Press your heel to the floor. Reverse and stretch other calf muscle.

FORMATIONS

Formation 1: This is the formation to use on game day. Cheerleaders should stand in two staggered lines. This allows each cheerleader to be seen whether they are in the front row or the back row. Extend each line as needed for the number of cheerleaders you have. When performing ripple chants or cheers, remind cheerleaders to remember which row they are in so they can recite the correct words and perform the correct motions.



Formation 2: This formation can be used during performances.



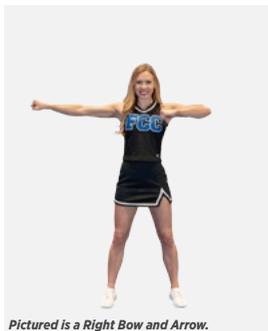
MOTIONS

Learning motions properly ensures that routines will be done precisely and accurately. Motions that are sharp, tight, and clean are essential for all cheerleaders. Use this section as a reference for routines.

When practicing motions, make sure your cheerleaders follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Keep motions in front of you: If you hit a motion properly, you should be able to see your arms and fists in your peripheral vision while looking forward (with the exception of a Touchdown motion).
- ◆ Watch arm levels: Keep shoulders relaxed. A T-motion should be leveled and a High V or Low V should look like a “V”, with locked elbows and straight arms and no bent elbows.
- ◆ When making a fist, the thumb should always be on the outside of the fingers. Notice that when the index finger side of the fist is facing out, it looks like a big “O.” When turned the other way, with the pinky finger on the outside, there is a little “O.” When hitting a motion, ensure cheerleaders use proper fist direction. For a “High V,” you should be able to see the big “O” side of the fist.
- ◆ Keep wrists flat (avoid bent or cocked): Your wrists should be perfectly flat, as if they were extensions of your arms.
- ◆ Use proper hand placement for claps: Keep elbows in and clasped hands right below your chin.
- ◆ Maintain sharpness with motions by not bouncing, swinging, or inserting extra motions.

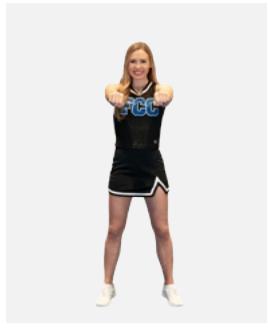
When your cheerleaders are learning a new routine, cheer, chant, or jump, have them practice sharp motions. The way they practice is the way they will perform on game day.



Pictured is a Right Bow and Arrow.

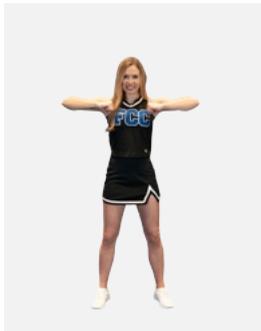
Bow and Arrow

One arm is in a Broken T while the other arm is in a T motion.



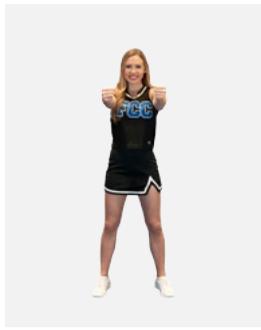
Buckets

Both arms are extended forward with hands in fists and the back of the hands facing up.



Broken T

Similar to the T motion with both elbows bent inward and fists to chest. Can be specific to either arm by only using half of the Broken T.



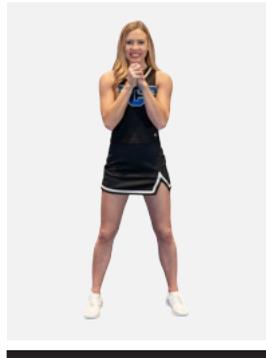
Candlesticks

Arms are straight out, parallel to each other and the floor. Fists should face inward, as if holding a candle in each hand.



Clap

Similar to a clasp, but hands are flat against each other. This is one of two clapping positions.



Clasp

Hands are held together below the chin. This is one of two clapping positions.



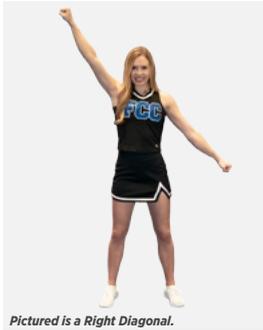
High Clasp

Arms are straight above the head in a clasp and slightly in front of the head. A clasp can also be low, with arms straight down.



Daggers

Bend both arms at the elbow. Hold arms parallel to each other and tight to the chest.

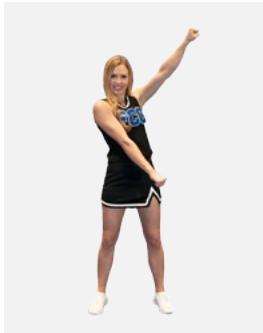


Pictured is a Right Diagonal.

Diagonal

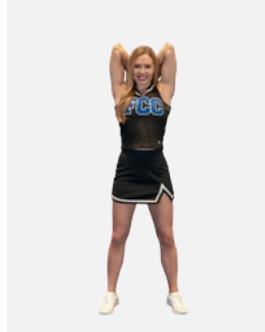
One arm is in a High V position while the other is in a Low V position.

Broken Diagonal: From a diagonal, bend elbows with hands in fists and tight to chest.



K Motion

Left arm is extended at a 45-degree angle to the side and the right arm down and angled across the body.



Hands Behind Head

Elbows bent and hands behind the head with fists touching.



Pictured is a Left L

L Motion

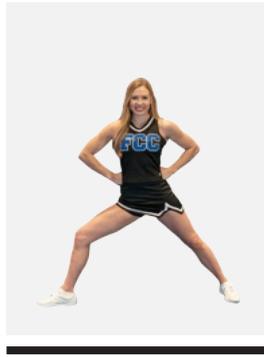
Raise one arm to a T motion. Extend the other arm straight up by the ear.

Can also be done low by extending one arm in a T motion and the other arm straight down.



Lunge

Front leg is in front with knee bent and back leg straight with foot sideways.



Side Lunge

Standing with legs wider than shoulder-width apart, bend one knee and point foot out. Keep other leg straight with foot pointed forward.



O motion

Hands over the head with the right hand grasping the left wrist. Left hand is in a forward facing fist.



Ready Position

Feet are positioned shoulder-width apart while hands rest on hips. This will be the position in which most cheers are called.

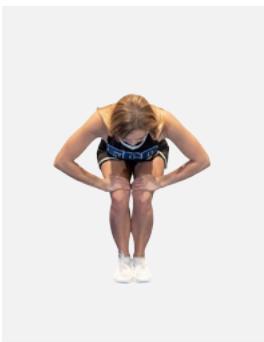


Pictured is a Right Punch.

Punch

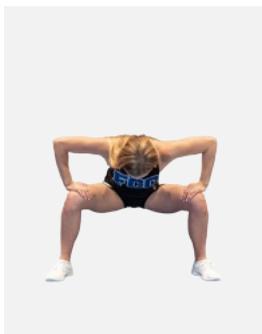
Right Punch: Left arm rests on the hip. Right arm is extended straight up by the ear. Both hands are in fists.

Left Punch: Right arm rests on the hip while left arm is extended straight up by the ear.



Squat Feet Together

Feet together, high squat position with hands on knees, elbows out, and head down.



Squat Feet Apart

Feet wide in a squat position with hands on knees, elbows out, and head down.



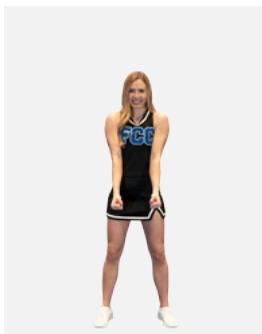
T Motion

Extend both arms out to the side of your body to create a T shape. Hands are in tight fists, with arms forward enough to be seen out of the corner of your eyes.



High Touchdown

Extend both arms straight up by your ears. Hands are in fists.



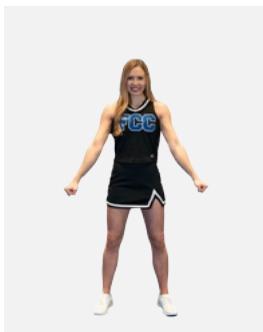
Low Touchdown

Extend both arms straight down. Hands are in fists.



High V

Both arms are raised at an angle to create a V shape. Hands are in tight fists with arms forward enough to be seen out of the corner of your eyes.



Low V

This is similar to the High V, but both arms are lowered to create an upside-down V shape. Hands are in tight fists, with arms forward enough to be seen out of the corner of your eyes.



Left High V

*Right arm rests on the hip.
Left arm is extended at a 45
degree angle to the side.
Both hands are in fists.*

Right V or Left V

can be
low or
high
and use
only half
of the V
with the
other
hand on
the hip.



Right High V

*Left arm rests on the hip.
Right arm is extended at a
45 degree angle to the side.
Both hands are in fists.*

→ Cheer Drills

MOTION DRILLS

The purpose of these motion drills is to help cheerleaders put their knowledge of motions to counts and rhythms. Cheerleaders who know every motion often forget the placement and sharpness when performing. Encourage them to make the transition from one motion to the next look sharp, clean, quick, and simple.

Standing in ready position, start with a slow 8 count so that each motion is correctly performed with each count. Once cheerleaders get the hang of the motion, you can increase the speed of the count. Below are two 8-count drills that include a series of motions.

MOTION DRILL 1	MOTION DRILL 2	MOTION DRILL 3	MOTION DRILL 4
<i>1. Clap</i>	<i>1. Left L</i>	<i>1. Bow & Arrow</i>	<i>1. Low Clasp</i>
<i>2. Clasp</i>	<i>2. Right L</i>	<i>2. Buckets</i>	<i>2. Left Low V</i>
<i>3. High Touchdown.</i>	<i>3. Right Diagonal</i>	<i>3. High Clasp</i>	<i>3. Right Low V</i>
<i>4. Low Touchdown</i>	<i>4. Left Diagonal</i>	<i>4. Hands Behind Head</i>	<i>4. Low O Motion</i>
<i>5. High V</i>	<i>5. Candlesticks</i>	<i>5. K Motion</i>	<i>5. Left Low L</i>
<i>6. Low V</i>	<i>6. Daggers</i>	<i>6. High O Motion</i>	<i>6. Right Low L</i>
<i>7. T Motion</i>	<i>7. Right Punch</i>	<i>7. Right High V</i>	<i>7. Right Broken Diagonal</i>
<i>8. Broken T</i>	<i>8. Left Punch</i>	<i>8. Left High V</i>	<i>8. Left Broken Diagonal</i>

A great way to introduce someone to cheer coaching is to find a high school or college cheerleader to assist you during practice with demonstrations and technique.

- ◆ **Cheerleader Says** - This game is played just like the traditional game of Simon Says except that the things to do are cheerleading related. For example, you could say “Cheerleader says, ‘Do a High V!’” or “Cheerleader says, ‘Do a toe touch!’” You could also let the cheerleaders take turns calling motions and jumps. This game encourages cheerleaders to practice fundamentals by playing a fun game.

KNOWLEDGE DRILL

- ◆ **Cheerleader Tic-Tac-Toe** - Set up nine chairs in three rows. Divide the squad into X’s and O’s. Just like in regular tic-tac-toe, the X’s and O’s alternate, except they sit in the chairs instead of drawing it out on paper. Ask questions about the rules of the sport you are cheering for. The cheerleaders must raise their hands to answer. If they answer correctly, they sit on one of the chairs. The first team to get three in a row diagonally, vertically, or horizontally wins.

→ Jumps

Jumps are another key element of cheerleading. Performing jumps will help build your stamina, endurance, and flexibility. The following drills will help your cheerleaders to improve the height and form of their jumps. Focus on one jump per practice and encourage your cheerleaders to perform jumps at games after a cheer, chant, or dance routine. As you teach, stress good form over height of the jumps. *Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all jumps. Jumps should be done in the following manner with appropriate counts:*

Cheerleading Counts (Basic)

1. To begin the jump, stand in a clean position. Your feet should be together with your arms at your sides.
2. While in this position, you will count “5,6,7,8”
3. Next, on count “1,” bring arms into a High V as pictured. Hold the High V on count “2”
4. On count “3,” you will prepare to jump by swinging your arms down. As you bring your arms down, your knees should bend and your arms cross.
5. Count “4” is when you hit your jump.
6. Land on count “5” with your feet together and arms held at your sides. Hold this for count “6”
7. On count “7,” stand in a clean position and hold for count “8”



COUNT
1, 2



COUNT
3



COUNT
4



COUNT
5, 6



COUNT
7, 8

Cheerleading Counts (Intermediate)

1. To begin the jump, stand in a clean position. Your feet should be together with your arms at your sides.
2. While in this position, you will count “5,6,7,8”
3. Next, clasp on count “1,2”
4. On count “3,4” bring arms from clasp into a High V (Image 1)
5. On count “5” you will prepare to jump by swinging your arms down. As you bring your arms down, your knees should bend and your arms cross. (Image 2)
6. Hit your jump on count “6” (Image 3)
7. Land on count “7,8” (Image 4)
8. Stand on count “1” (Image 5)



IMAGE
1



IMAGE
2



IMAGE
3



IMAGE
4



IMAGE
5

Note: Instructional videos on the Upward YouTube Channel use these counts.

Spread Eagle

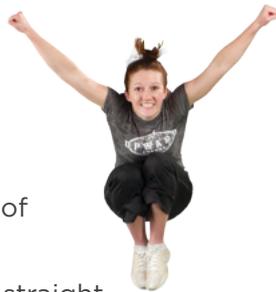
Help cheerleaders perfect their overall jump form by teaching this drill with Spread Eagle first before moving to another jump.

1. Arms in a High V and feet together.
2. Swing arms around. Slightly bend your knees, placing your weight on the balls of your feet.
3. Swing arms out and around to a High V, keeping your back straight. Spread legs with toes pointed, knees facing forward.
4. Squeeze legs together for a “feet together” landing with arms by your side.
5. Stand up with feet together and hands on hips or hands by your side.



Tuck Jump

1. Arms in a High V and feet together.
2. Swing arms around. Slightly bend your knees, placing your weight on the balls of your feet.
3. Keep legs squeezed together and back straight while bringing your legs up to your chest. Hit a T-motion or a High V with arms.
4. Squeeze legs together for a “feet together” landing with arms by your side.
5. Stand up with feet together and hands on hips or arms by your side.



Toe Touch

1. Arms in a High V and feet together.
2. Swing arms around. Slightly bend your knees, placing your weight on the balls of your feet.
3. Swing both arms out to a T-motion while lifting both legs in a split high as they will go.
4. Squeeze legs together for a “feet together” landing with arms by your side.
5. Stand up with feet together and hands on hips or arms by your side.



Herkie

The example shown is for a right herkie:

1. Arms in a High V and feet together.
2. Swing arms around. Slightly bend your knees, placing weight on the balls of your feet.
3. Swing right arm out to a T-motion, placing the left arm on your hip while lifting the right leg out to the side as high as it will go. Keep the left leg into a hurdle position to the side and slightly behind your body.
4. Squeeze legs together for a “feet together” landing with arms by your side.
5. Stand up with feet together and hands on hips.



All cheers, chants, and dance routines provided in this book are also demonstrated on MyUpward.org. You can also find cheers, chants, and dance routines from previous seasons on the Upward Sports YouTube page.

→ Cheers

It's time to get loud and to have some fun! This section will provide you with a base of cheers to use during the season. Squads are not required to use all the cheers and chants provided in this book. Squads are encouraged to create their own cheers, too! If you do create your own cheers, remember to keep them positive and uplifting. Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all cheers.

When teaching cheers, follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Teach the words first.
- ◆ Have cheerleaders repeat until everyone is familiar with the words.
- ◆ Teach the entire cheer, chant, or dance.
- ◆ As cheerleaders start to practice, make sure they are starting the cheer correctly. Some cheers start with “Ready? Ok!” while others will start with the name of the cheer. When starting the cheer, cheerleaders should be in ready position.
- ◆ Review slowly, but still focus on sharp and precise motions.
- ◆ Once everyone has the overall knowledge, practice the cheer at a full speed. Look for correct motion placement

and sharpness, while emphasizing squad synchronization from the very beginning.

- ◆ Do not move on without first perfecting technique.

Teach cheerleaders to end each cheer, chant, and dance routine by showing spirit! Encourage them to yell things such as, “Go, Upward!” “Let’s go!” and other similar phrases. Have them practice three to four short phrases after every cheer.

HEY UPWARD

WORD	MOTION
Hey	Squat and shuffle poms
Upward	Step back right, right punch
Give me a	Feet together and clap
U, P	Step right, right high V
PAUSE	Clap
U, P	Right high V
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
Hey	Squat and shuffle poms
Upward	Step back right, right punch
Give me a	Feet together and clap
W, A	Feet apart, High V
PAUSE	Clap
W, A	High V
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
Hey	Squat and shuffle poms

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Upward	Step back right, right punch
Give me a	Feet together and clap
R, D	Step left, left high V
PAUSE	Clap
R, D	Left high V
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
Upward	Clap
PAUSE	Clap
Together	Step forward and candlesticks
Let's hear it	Step and daggers
U, P	Step right, right high V
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
W, A	Feet apart, High V
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
R, D	Step left, left high V

UPWARD CAN'T BE BEAT

WORD	MOTION
Get Up	High clap with feet together
<i>PAUSE</i>	Hold
Clap	Clap and step forward
Your Hands	Clap
Get Up	High clap with feet together
<i>PAUSE</i>	Hold
Stomp	Daggers and stomp with right foot
Your Feet	Daggers and stomp with left foot
Yell It	Roll poms and step to the right
Loud	Daggers with feet together
Yell It	Roll poms and step to the left
Proud	Daggers with feet together
Upward	Punch with right foot forward
Can't Be	Dagger
Beat	Low V

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
<i>PAUSE</i>	Hold
Can't Be	Dagger
Beat	Low V

WHEN WE SAY (NEW!)

WORD	MOTION
When we say	Daggers
Blue	Clasp
You say	Daggers
Orange	Clasp
Blue	Step forward with right foot, squat, right dagger
Orange	Pump right dagger to a right punch
Blue	Squat, right dagger
Orange	Pump right dagger to a right punch
When we say	Step right foot back and put feet together, daggers
Play	Clasp
You say	Daggers
Win	Clasp
Play	Step forward with right foot, squat, right dagger
Win	Pump right dagger to a right punch
Play	Squat, right dagger

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Win	Pump right dagger to a right punch
When we say	Step right foot back and put feet together, daggers
Go	Clasp
You Say	Daggers
Upward	Clasp
Go	Step forward with right foot, squat, right dagger
Upward	Pump right dagger to a right punch
Go	Squat, right dagger
Upward	Pump right dagger to a right punch
Go	Squat, right dagger
Upward	Pump right dagger to a right punch

YELL IT PROUD

WORD	MOTION
Upward, <i>PAUSE</i>	Sit in a T, broken T, hit T again
Yell it proud	Feet together in high O
Yell	Low O
Blue*	Feet apart, right T
and	Clap
White	Left T
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Blue*	Right T
and	Clap
White	Left T
<i>PAUSE</i>	Feet together and clap
Upward, <i>PAUSE</i>	Sit in a T, broken T, hit T again
Yell it proud	Feet together in high O
Again	Swing to a low O
Yell go	Step forward, sit in low V

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
→ Fight	Stand in a broken T
Win	Sit in high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Feet together and clap
Go	Step forward, sit in low V
Fight	Stand in a broken T
Win	Sit in high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Feet together and clap
Blue*	Feet apart, right T
and	Clap
White	Left T
<i>PAUSE</i>	Feet together and clap
Go	Step forward, sit in low V
Fight	Stand in a broken T
Win	Sit in high V

DOWN THE FIELD

WORD	MOTION
Hey crowd	Right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Arms by side and dip
It's time	High v
To get	Jump
Loud	Land
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap and stand
To the right	Right T and step to the right
Yell	Broken right T and dip
Move	Right punch with right foot in front
That	Right dagger
Ball	Right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Move	Right punch with right foot in front
That	Right dagger
Ball	Right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap with feet together

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
> To the left	Left T and step to the left
Yell	Broken left T and dip
Down	Low touchdown with left foot in front
The	Daggers
Field	Left punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Down	Low touchdown
The	Daggers
Field	Left punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap with feet together
Hey crowd	Hands on hips
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
All together	Swing arms in behind head
Move	Right punch and step forward
That	Right dagger
Ball	Right punch

(continued on next page)

DOWN THE FIELD (cont.)

WORD	MOTION
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Down	Low touchdown
The	Daggers
Field	Left punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Move	Right punch and step forward
That	Right dagger
Ball	Right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Down	Low touchdown
The	Daggers
Field	Left punch

VICTORY

WORD	MOTION
Upward	High V and prep for a jump
Fans	Circle arms around
Get On	High V and hit jump
Your Feet	Land with feet together
Stand Up For	Jump out to ready position
Vic	High V
To	Broken high V
Ry	High V
Shout It	Step forward with right foot, daggers
Out Yell	Step together, touchdown
Go	Step out, right high V
Big	Broken right high V
Blue	Right high V
PAUSE	Clasp
Go	Step out, left high V
Big	Broken left high V

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Blue	left high V
PAUSE	Clasp
Go	Step out, right high V
Big	Broken right high V
Blue	Right high V

WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT

WORD	MOTION
Defense	Right arm across body
<i>PAUSE</i>	Right high V
Defense	Left arm across body
<i>PAUSE</i>	High v with feet together
Be strong with your	Jump
Might	Stand
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Come on	Shuffle poms
Crowd	Clap
Help 'em	Clap above head
Out	Clap above head
Let's go	Right low V pump
Hold tight	Left high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Let's go	Right low V pump
Hold tight	Left high V

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Defense	Shuffle poms
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Defense	Clap above head
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap above head
Hold	Bow & arrow
Em	Swith bow & arrow
With all your	Low clasp
Might	High V with feet apart

YELL LOUD AND PROUD

WORD	MOTION
PAUSE	(start with back turned towards audience)
Come	Step back with left foot, hit a high touchdown
On	Turn around to the front keeping feet in place (left foot in front, right foot behind), daggers
Upward	T motion
Yell Loud	Right high V
And Proud	Left high V
Show	High V
Your	Swing arms around
Pride	Tuck jump
And help us	Land with feet together
Out Yell	Jump out to ready position
Blue	Right T
Orange	Right T
And White	Left T
PAUSE	Clasp

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Blue	Right T
Orange	Clasp
And White	Left T

GET UP AND YELL

WORD	MOTION
PAUSE	Clap
Get	Step back
Up	Kick right leg and high V
And	Squat and daggers
Yell	Feet apart and right punch
PAUSE	Clap
Orange	Right high V
PAUSE	Clap
Orange	Right high V
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
Get	Step back
Up	Kick right leg and high V
And	Squat and daggers
Yell	Feet apart and right punch
PAUSE	Clap
Blue	Left low V

(cont.) >

WORD	MOTION
PAUSE	Clap
Blue	Left low V
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
Get	Step back
Up	Kick right leg and high V
And	Squat and daggers
Yell	Feet apart and right punch
PAUSE	Clap
White	High V
PAUSE	Clap
White	High V
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
Hey	Clap high
Hey	Clap low
Get Up	Clap
Yell	Clap

(continued on next page)

GET UP AND YELL (cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Orange	Step forward and right high V
Blue	Left low V
White	High V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Orange	Step forward and right high V
Blue	Left low V
White	High V

GO UPWARD

WORD	MOTION
Hey	Dip and daggers
Fans	Feet apart and T motion
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
To the right	Sit and right high V
To the right	Sit and right high V in ripple
Yell	Dip and right dagger
Go	Feet apart and right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Go	Right high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Hey	Dip and daggers
Fans	Feet apart and T motion
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
To the left	Sit and left high V
To the left	Sit and left high V in ripple
Yell	Dip and left dagger
Upward	Feet apart and left punch

(cont.) →

WORD	MOTION
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Upward	Left high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Hey	Dip and daggers
Fans	Feet apart and T motion
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Yell it loud	Clap high or low O
Yell it loud	Clap low or high O
Go	Step forward and right high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Upward	Left high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Go	Right high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Upward	Left high V

LET'S ROCK N' ROLL

WORD	MOTION
This side	Step right and right T
<i>PAUSE</i>	Step and clap
Let's rock	Step back and low V
Yell	Step together and clap
Upward	Step forward and right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Right dagger
Don't stop	Right high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Upward	Right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Right dagger
Don't stop	Right high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Feet together and clap
This side	Step to the left and left T
<i>PAUSE</i>	Step and clap
Let's roll	Step back and circle poms
Yell	Step together and clap
Win	Step forward and left high V

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
<i>PAUSE</i>	Break left high V
Win	High V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Win	Left high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Break left high V
Win	High V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Feet together and clap
Everybody	Feet apart and high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Hands to side
Let's rock	Squat and low V
And roll	Feet together and circle poms
Yell Upward	Step right and right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Right dagger
Don't stop	Right high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Clap
Win	Left high V
<i>PAUSE</i>	Break left high V
Win	High V

TOUCHDOWN, SCORE SIX

WORD	MOTION
Hey	Shuffle poms in a squat
Upward	Punch and stand
Cheer	Low V and step to the right
On	Clasp
Your Team	Low V and step to the left
Yell	Clasp
Move	Left buckets in a left lunge
That	Bow & arrow
Ball	T
PAUSE	Hold
Move	Left buckets
That	Bow & arrow
Ball	T
PAUSE	Clasp with feet together
Touchdown	High touchdown in a right lunge
PAUSE	Hold
Score	Daggers
PAUSE	Hold

(cont.)

WORD	MOTION
Touchdown	High touchdown
PAUSE	Hold
Score	Daggers
Six	Punch
PAUSE	Clasp with feet together
Come On	High V
Team	Swing
PAUSE	Toe touch jump
Let's	Land
Get To It	Hands by side and stand
Move	Left buckets in a left lunge
That	Bow & arrow
Ball	T
PAUSE	Clasp with feet together
Touchdown	High touchdown in a right lunge
PAUSE	Hold
Score	Daggers
Six	Punch

→ Chants

Chants are shorter than cheers and are recited 3 times. However, the crowd is usually a good indicator of when to end a chant. In the next few pages, you will find fun chants that are designed for all age divisions. *Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all Chants.*

When learning and teaching chants:

- ◆ Learn the words first.
- ◆ Be sure to teach the call to the chant. Below the name of each chant is the “call it” section which indicates how to start the chant.
- ◆ Repeat the chant until everyone is familiar with the words and rhythm.
- ◆ Learn the motions.
- ◆ Practice it at a full speed and with sharpness.

Always look for correct motion placement and sharpness, while emphasizing team synchronization. Do not move on to a new chant without perfecting technique.

BIG G, LITTLE O (NEW!)*Call it: Big G, Little O, go go*

WORD	MOTION
Big G	High O Motion
Little O	Low O Mot
Go	Low V
PAUSE	Broken Low V
Go	Low V
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

DEFENSE, HOLD THAT LINE (NEW!)*Call it: Defense hold that line*

WORD	MOTION
Defense	Broken T with right knee popped
Hold That	T with left knee popped
Line	Broken T with right knee popped
PAUSE	Shuffle poms in a squat
PAUSE	Shuffle poms in a squat
PAUSE	Shuffle poms in a squat
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

FIRST DOWN*Call it: First down, first down, Upward let's score a touchdown*

WORD	MOTION
First	Clasp
Down	Low V
First	Clasp
Down	Low V
Upward let's score a	Clasp
Touch	Squat, right dagger
Down	Stand up, right punch
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

GET FIRED UP (NEW!)*Call it: Get fired up*

WORD	MOTION
Hey	Shuffle poms in a squat
Upward	Jump out and hit a high V
Get	Clasp
Fired	Clasp
Up	Step in and hit a right high V
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

GO UPWARD

Call it: Everybody yell go Upward

WORD	MOTION
Hey	Shuffle poms in a squat
Go Upward	Right punch and stand
Everybody	Turn right and shuffle poms
Yell	Turn left and shuffle poms
Go Upward	Right punch and stand
<i>PAUSE</i>	<i>PAUSE</i>

REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES

GO UPWARD GO

Call it: Go, Upward, go

WORD	MOTION
Upward	Feet apart, right punch
<i>PAUSE</i>	Squat and clap
Take	Feet together, right punch
Con-	Right dagger
Trol	Right punch
Go	Ripple side lunge with K (1)
Upward	Ripple side lunge with K (2)
Go	Ripple side lunge with K (3)
<i>PAUSE</i>	Feet together and clap

REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES

HOLD 'EM UPWARD*Call it: Hold 'em, Hold 'em Upward*

WORD	MOTION
Hold 'Em	T in a back lunge
PAUSE	Broken T and turn to the left
Hold 'Em	T and turn back to center in a back lunge
Upward	Nod
PAUSE	Turn left, high clap twice
PAUSE	Turn right, high clap twice

REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES**LET'S GET SIX MORE***Call it: Touchdown, Upward, let's get six more*

WORD	MOTION
Touchdown	Daggers
PAUSE	High touchdown
Upward	Clasp
PAUSE	Clasp
Let's	Clasp
Get	Clasp
Six More	High V

REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES**OFFENSE***Call it: O, o, o, offense*

WORD	MOTION
O	High O motion
O	Low O motion
O	High O motion
Offense	High V

REPEAT 3 MORE TIMES

OUR TEAM IS AWESOME*Call it: Our team is awesome*

WORD	MOTION
A	Right high V and step to the right
W	Broken right high V
E	Right high V
PAUSE	Clap with feet together
S	Left high V and step to the left
O-M	Broken left high V
E	Left high V
PAUSE	Clap with feet together
Awesome	High clap
PAUSE	High clap
Awesome	Low clap
PAUSE	Low clap
Our team is	Roll arms at broken T level
Awesome	High V
PAUSE	Clap
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

UPWARD DEFENSE*Call it: Get tough*

WORD	MOTION
Up	Broken right high V
Ward	Right high V
De	Hold right high V, broken left high V
Fense	Hold right high V, left high V
Get Tough	Low V
PAUSE	Jump, overhead clap
PAUSE	Jump, overhead clap
PAUSE	Jump, overhead clap
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU (NEW!)*Call it: We're so proud of you*

WORD	MOTION
We're	Daggers
PAUSE	Clasp
So	Daggers
PAUSE	Clasp
Proud	Daggers
Of	Clasp
You	Daggers
PAUSE	Clasp
We're	Daggers
So	Clasp
Proud	Daggers
Of	Clasp
You	Daggers
PAUSE	Clasp three times
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

WHAT'S THAT*Call it: What do we want, TD, what's that, touchdown*

WORD	MOTION
What do	Pony (starting with right foot forward) and swing arms back
We Want	Pony (switching feet) and swing arms to front
TD	Pony (switching feet) and Two Overhead Clasps
What's	Pony (starting with right foot forward) and swing arms back
That	Pony (switching feet) and swing arms to front
Touch	Pony (switching feet) and daggers
Down	Pony (switching feet) and touchdown
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

D-E-F-E-N-S-E

Call it: Defense, defense

WORD	MOTION
D-E	Low V
F	Clasp
E-N	Low V
S-E	Clasp
Defense	(Ripple 1) Step back with right foot, hit a low V
Defense	(Ripple 2) Step back with right foot, hit a low V
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

DEFENSE GET TOUGH

Call it: Defense, get tough

WORD	MOTION
Come on	Wave to the right
Crowd	Wave to the left
Get fired	Pump and step back
Up	Pump
Defense	Swing arms down and step feet together
PAUSE	Hands behind head
Get Tough	Muscle Pose
PAUSE	Clap
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

FIRST AND TEN

Call it: Upward fans yell go, fight, win

WORD	MOTION
First	Daggers in a squat
And Ten	High touchdown and stand
Upward	Jump feet out and hit a low V
Fans	Clasp
Yell Go	High V
Fight	Swing arms down and cross
Win	Jump feet together and hit a low V
PAUSE	Hold
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

HEY, HEY, HERE WE GO (NEW!)

Call it: Upward, let's go

WORD	MOTION
Hey	High V
Hey	Hands behind head
Here We	Step back with right foot, Hit a low V
Go	Feet together, Clasp
Upward	Turn to the right and swoosh poms
PAUSE	Turn to the center, Clasp
Let's Go	Turn to the left and swoosh poms
PAUSE	Turn to the center, Clasp
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

HOLD THAT LINE

Call it: Hold that line

WORD	MOTION
PAUSE	Clap
De	Pop right knee, right diagonal
Fense	Broken diagonal
PAUSE	Right diagonal
Hold	Swing arms around
Tight	Hug self
Yell	Hands on hips
PAUSE	Turn to the center, Clasp
Hold That	Pop left knee, hug self
Line	Step forward, T motion
PAUSE	Clap
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

MOVE THAT BALL FOR A TD

Call it: Move that ball for a TD

WORD	MOTION
M	Daggers and step to the right
O	Right punch
PAUSE	Clap twice with feet together
V	Daggers and step to the left
E	Left punch
PAUSE	Clap twice with feet together
Move	Right broken T and step to the right
That ball	Pump again and step to feet together
For a t	T and step to the left
D	Left punch and step to feet together
PAUSE	Hold
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

OFFENSE SHAKE 'EM OFF

Call it: Offense shake 'em off

WORD	MOTION
Shake	Shuffle poms to the right
Shake	Shuffle poms to the left
Shake 'em	Shuffle poms to the right
Off	Jump feet apart and hit ready position
Offense	O
Shake	Shake poms down with feet together
Off	Hands on hips in a back lunge
PAUSE	Clap with feet together

REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES

PUSH 'EM BACK

Call it: Push 'em back, Push 'em back

WORD	MOTION
Defense	Forward candlesticks and step back in a squat
PAUSE	Hands behind head in a squat with feet together
Attack	Low V with feet apart
PAUSE	Clap
Push 'Em Back	Right low V with a right squat
PAUSE	Hold
Push 'Em Back	Left high V with feet together
PAUSE	Hold

REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES

TOUCHDOWN, TOUCHDOWN

Call it: Touchdown, touchdown, we want a touchdown

WORD	MOTION
PAUSE	Clap
We	Low V and hop with left foot in front
Want	Clap and switch feet
A touchdown	Low V and switch feet
PAUSE	Clap with feet together
Touchdown	High touchdown with feet apart
PAUSE	Daggers and dip
Touchdown	High touchdown with feet together
PAUSE	Clap
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

UPWARD LET'S GO

Call it: Go big blue

WORD	MOTION
Upward	Rustle poms
PAUSE	Clasp
Let's Go	(Ripple 1) Step back with right foot, T motion
Let's Go	(Ripple 2) Step back with right foot, T motion
Go	Step out, clasp
Big	Clasp
Blue	High V
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

YELL GO GO

Call it: Yell go go

WORD	MOTION
PAUSE	Clap
Yell It	Jump feet out, T motion
PAUSE	Broken T
To the G	Left toe pop, right T
To the O	Right toe pop, left T
Yell Go	Jump together, High V
PAUSE	Step right foot forward, swing arms in
Go	High V
PAUSE	Feet together, clap
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

YELL W-I-N

Call it: Yell W-I-N

WORD	MOTION
Upward	Stack broken T*
PAUSE	Hold
If You Wanna Win	Left diagonal
Yell W	Right low V
I	Right T
N	Right high V
PAUSE	Hold
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

* To “stack” a broken T, bring both motions of the broken T in, with the right arm above the left arm.

BIG G, LITTLE O (NEW!)

Call it: Big G, little O, go go

WORD	MOTION
Big	(Ripple 1) Low V (Ripple 2) High V
G	Clasp
Little	(Ripple 1) High V (Ripple 2) Low V
O	Clasp
Go	(Ripple 1) Low right V (Ripple 2) High right V
PAUSE	(Ripple 1) Low Broken right V (Ripple 2) High Broken right V
Go	(Ripple 1) Low right V (Ripple 2) High right V
PAUSE	Clasp
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

BREAK THROUGH DEFENSE

Call it: Break through defense

WORD	MOTION
B	Right punch with feet apart
R	Right arm across body and dip
E-A	High clasp and stand
K	K and dip
Break	Broken T with feet together
Through	Buckets and step forward
PAUSE	Broken T pump
De-	Buckets and pump
Fense	Broken T with feet together
PAUSE	Hold
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

DEFENSE COME THROUGH

Call it: Defense come through

WORD	MOTION
Upward	High clap and hop
PAUSE	High clap and hop again
You know	Right bucket and dip
What	Broken T and stand
To do	Clean arms by side
PAUSE	Clap
Defense	Shuffle poms
PAUSE	Clap
Come through	High V with feet apart
PAUSE	Clap with feet together
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

GO BLUE, GO WHITE

Call it: Go blue, go white

WORD	MOTION
PAUSE	Clap twice
Let's	Step to the right with right arm low across body
Go	Step feet together, right broken T
Blue	Right high V
PAUSE	Clap
Let's	Step to the left, with left arm low across body
Go	Step feet together, left broken T
White	Left high V
PAUSE	Clap
Go	Step forward and hit a low V
Blue	Sit and hit a high V
PAUSE	Bring feet together, clean
Go	Clap
White	Right punch
PAUSE	Clap twice
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

HOLD THAT LINE

Call it: Hold that line

WORD	MOTION
H	Right T across body
O	Right broken T and bring right leg up
L	Left buckets and right leg steps back
D	High touchdown and turn
Hold	Low touchdown
That	Broken T
Line	T
PAUSE	Hold
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

REACHING FOR #1

Call it: Reaching for #1

WORD	MOTION
Upward	K and side lunge
PAUSE	Feet together and clap
Has	Step forward right and low V
Just	Break low V
Begun	Low V
Reaching	Hop and clap above head
PAUSE	Hop and clap above head
For number	Step back and right dagger
One	Stand and right punch, hold
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

STOP THAT BALL

Call it: Stop that ball

WORD	MOTION
PAUSE	Clap
Upward	Right L and step to the right
PAUSE	Right broken T and left hand behind head with feet together
Defense	Right T and step to the right
PAUSE	Clap with feet together
Stop that	Spin to the left
Ball	Right punch with feet together
PAUSE	Clap
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

T-O-U-C-H-D-O-W-N

Call it: T-o-u-c-h-d-o-w-n

WORD	MOTION
T	Step back with right foot, T Motion
O	Turn to the right, high O motion
U	(Ripple 1) Right high V
C	(Ripple 2) Right high V
H	(Ripple 3) Right high V
D	Left low V
O	High O motion
W	Clasp
N	Clasp
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

TOUCHDOWN, GO UPWARD

Call it: Touchdown, go Upward

WORD	MOTION
T	T and step forward (ripple 1)
D	(Ripple 1) Hit daggers, do a complete spin, feet together
T	T and step forward (ripple 2)
D	(Ripple 2) Hit daggers, do a complete spin, feet together
Touchdown	High touchdown on toes
PAUSE	Daggers and squat
Go Upward	High V with feet apart
PAUSE	Hands by side with feet together
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

UPWARD HERE WE GO

Call it: Upward here we go

WORD	MOTION
Hey	Broken T with right toe tap
Hey	Broken T with left toe tap
PAUSE	Hold
Here We Go	T and shake poms
Upward	Hands behind head and squat to the right
Here We	Hands behind head and squat to the left
Go	High V and shake poms with feet together
PAUSE	Hold
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

UPWARD, LET'S WIN

Call it: Upward, let's win

WORD	MOTION
First And	Low V with feet apart
Ten	Clap
Do It	Swing O down and around
Again	High O with feet together
Upward	Low V
PAUSE	Clap
Let's Win	Punch
PAUSE	Hold
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

UPWARD SIX MORE

Call it: Upward, six more

WORD	MOTION
Upward	T and step forward
PAUSE	Daggers and turn
Let's run	Touchdown and step forward
Let's score	Daggers and turn
Upward	T with feet apart
PAUSE	Right broken T and left hand behind head with a dip
Six more	Right T and left hand on hip with feet together
PAUSE	Clap
REPEAT 2 MORE TIMES	

→ Dance Routines

(POM, TIMEOUT, AND HALFTIME)

After your cheerleaders have learned enough cheers and chants to provide a significant base to use during each game, consider teaching them a dance routine that can be performed at halftime or during the season celebration. *Visit MyUpward.org for video demonstrations of all Dance Routines.* Here are some points to consider as you prepare to teach dance routines:

- ◆ If a routine involves poms, be sure to teach placement.
- ◆ Evaluate your squad's performance. If there is a step too difficult for your group, simplify it before continuing. The goal is to master clean and simple routines.
- ◆ Consider teaching two 8 counts per practice. Review each one until everyone has learned the routine and it looks synchronized. Continue to teach the rest of the routine at your next practice.
- ◆ Once the cheerleaders have learned the entire dance routine, make necessary corrections to improve motions and motion placement. The best way to do this is to count aloud, "Five, six, seven, eight, one" and have your squad freeze on count "one." Make the necessary corrections and repeat the drill for "one" again. Do not go on to count "two" until everyone has correctly performed count "one." Repeat for count "two." When everyone has learned count "two," add that to count "one." Repeat the process for the entire routine until it is perfected.
- ◆ Allow half of your squad to watch while the other half performs the dance routine. This is a great way to encourage your cheerleaders. The encouragement from their own teammates will inspire and excite them for their big performance.

➔ Types of Dance Routines

There are three types of dance routines outlined on the following pages, including Pom, Halftime, and Time Out Dances.

POM DANCE: Pom dances are eight 8 counts that can be performed during one-minute timeouts or for halftime. Pom dances are three 8 counts of cheer motions followed by one more 8 count of transitions repeated twice for a total of eight 8 counts. Pom dances include formation changes, level changes, and ripples in a cheer-motion style with poms.

HALFTIME DANCE: Halftime dances are eight 8 counts that can be performed during one-minute timeouts or for halftime. Halftime dances are four 8 counts of unique dance motions that are repeated twice for a total of eight 8 counts. Halftime dances include level changes, footwork, and floor work in a dance style.

TIME OUT DANCE: Timeout dances are the simplest of all dances and can be performed during 30-second timeouts. The intro to all timeout dances begins with one 8-count clapped out, followed by one 8-count dance that is repeated three times for a total of four 8 counts. Timeout dances include level changes and ripples in a dance style.

Feel free to modify cheers, chants, and dances to fit the skill level of your group.

BETTER WITH YOU

EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Pony with right punch
2	
3	Pony with left punch
4	
5	Feet apart and circle around in buckets
6	
7	
8	Poms on left hip

EIGHT COUNT 2	MOTION
1	Pop right foot and point with right arm
2	
3	Rock hips
4	
5	Right arm in a T with left foot back
6	
7	Continue with ripple
8	

(cont.) →

EIGHT COUNT 3	MOTION
1	Step and circle poms
2	
3	Squat to left knee
4	
5	Pump poms to the right
6	Pump poms to the right
7	Pump poms to the right
8	Clean

EIGHT COUNT 4	MOTION
1	Switch line in right bow-n-arrow
2	
3	Left bow-n-arrow
4	
5	Swing poms around
6	
7	Stand with poms behind head
8	

REPEAT EIGHT COUNTS 1-4 ONE MORE TIME

End Pop right foot and point with right arm

LET'S GO

INTRO	MOTION
1	Step forward with right foot and hit a T
2	Clap above head
3	T
4	Clap above head
5	T
6	Clap above head
7	Step back with hands on hips
8	Hold

EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Right foot steps forward and hit a broken T
2	Forward buckets
3	Sit in a low V
and	Stand and break low V
4	Sit in a low V
5	Right foot steps back with hands behind head
6	Repeat for ripple 2
7	Repeat for Ripple 3
8	Clean

REPEAT EIGHT COUNT 3 MORE TIMES

SWAY

BASIC LEVEL HALFTIME ROUTINE

EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Daggers and step to the right
2	Candlesticks and kick left leg
3	Daggers and dip
4	
5	Hands on hips in a back lunge
6	
7	Hands behind head and pop hip
8	Pop hip

EIGHT COUNT 2	MOTION
1	Candlesticks to the right with left foot behind - Ripple 1
2	Ripple 2
3	Ripple 3
4	Hold
5	Swing arms around
6	Right arm in front of belly and left arm behind back
7	Right low V and sit to the right
8	Left low V and sit to the left

(cont.)

EIGHT COUNT 3	MOTION
1	Right hand behind head and left hand on hip
2	
3	Left candlestick and step back
4	
5	High V and step back
6	
7	Roll to a low V and turn
8	Pop hip

EIGHT COUNT 4	MOTION
1	Right punch with left arm in front of belly - Ripple 1
2	Ripple 2
3	Ripple 3
4	Hold
5	Hands behind head with feet apart
6	
7	Hands on hips with feet together
8	Left low V and sit to the left

ENDING MOTION: HIGH V

CLAP IT OUT

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL TIMEOUT ROUTINE

INTRO	MOTION
1	Step forward with right foot and hit a T
2	Clap above head
3	T
4	Clap above head
5	T
6	Clap above head
7	Step back with hands on hips
8	Hold
EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Hands behind head with feet apart
2	Clap to the right while pointing left toe (Ripple 1)
3	Ripple 2
4	Ripple 3
5	Squat over left knee
6	Look up
7	Right T and left hand on hip with feet together
8	Right punch and left arm by side
REPEAT EIGHT COUNT 3 MORE TIMES	

End

Hand on hips

EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Dip in a right dagger
2	Stand in a left dagger
3	Feet apart and cross wrist
4	
5	T
6	
7	Cross arms and rock to the right
8	Cross arms and rock to the left

EIGHT COUNT 2	MOTION
1	Squat to the right and shuffle poms
2	
3	Turn and pump right clasp
4	Pump left clap
5	Pump high right clasp
6	Pump high left clasp
7	Turn in left candlesticks
8	

(cont.)

EIGHT COUNT 3	MOTION
1	Step and swing poms
2	Feet together with poms behind head
3	Feet apart in left candlesticks
4	
5	Windmill to floor (ripple 1)
6	
7	Windmill to floor (ripple 2)
8	Clean

EIGHT COUNT 4	MOTION
1	Windmill to floor (ripple 3)
2	
3	Stand with poms on hips
4	
5	Cross arms and switch lines
6	
7	Alternate high and low Vs
8	Clean

REPEAT EIGHT COUNTS 1-4 ONE MORE TIME

End

Pop left knee with poms behind head

RISE UP

EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Hug and squat
2	
3	T
4	Roll right arm in
5	
6	Swing arms in
7	Hands behind head
8	

EIGHT COUNT 2	MOTION
1	Snap with feet apart
2	
3	Lean to the right
4	Lean to the left
5	Squat over right knee
6	Hands on hips
7	Head twirl
8	

(cont.)

EIGHT COUNT 3	MOTION
1	Low touchdown and squat
2	Broken T and stand (feet apart)
3	Right knee in and out
4	Head nod
5	Step to the left and swim
6	Clean
7	Step to the right and swim
8	Clean

EIGHT COUNT 4	MOTION
1	Slap and step
2	Clasp and step
3	Wrap arms head and turn
4	Clean
5	Walk with hands behind back
6	
7	Turn and right high V pump
8	Right high V pump

AFTER TRANSITION, REPEAT EIGHT COUNTS 1-4

End Cross arms and pose

HEY DJ

EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Step and cross right pom
2	Step together and cross left pom
3	Cross feet in a muscle pose
4	Feet apart in a muscle pose
5	Left dagger
6	Right dagger
7	Right pom over face
8	Right muscle pose

EIGHT COUNT 2	MOTION
1	Clean with poms by side
2	
3	High touchdown and pop right knee
4	Break into low touchdown and pop left knee
5	Hands behind head and step back
6	Kick with a low V
7	Clean with poms by side
8	Clap

(cont.) →

EIGHT COUNT 3	MOTION
1	Pop feet apart and swing poms to the right
2	Broken T
3	Swing poms to the left
4	Broken T
5	T
6	Squat with right pom on knee and left pom behind back (Ripple 2 begins)
7	(Ripple 2 ends) (Ripple 3 begins)
8	(Ripple 3 ends)

EIGHT COUNT 4	MOTION
1	Shuffle poms in circle formation
2	
3	Connect with right pom with left pom on hip
4	
5	Left pom in a high touchdown
6	
7	Shuffle poms and return back into formation
8	Clap

AFTER TRANSITION, REPEAT EIGHT COUNTS 1-4

End

Cross arms

KIND OF LOVE

EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Step to the right with right arm across body
2	Left foot behind in a right L (ripple 2 starts)
3	Step and swing right arm (ripple 3 starts)
4	O with right foot behind
5	(finish ripple 2)
6	(finish ripple 3)
7	Sit to right in a O
8	

EIGHT COUNT 2	MOTION
1	Sit in low V
2	Break and sit in low V
3	Stand with poms behind head
4	Poms on hips
5	Step with left arm across body
6	Turn and punch right arm up
7	Squat
8	Stand

(cont.)

EIGHT COUNT 3	MOTION
1	Pump to the right
2	Pump to the left
3	Step with right arm forward
4	Turn in a liberty with a left T
5	Poms in a left touchdown (ripple 1)
6	Poms in a right touchdown
7	Squat over right knee (ripple 2 starts)
8	

EIGHT COUNT 4	MOTION
1	(ripple 3 starts)
2	
3	Finish ripple squatting right knee
4	
5	Switch lines and shuffle poms
6	
7	Poms on hips
8	

AFTER TRANSITION, REPEAT EIGHT COUNTS 1-4

End

Step back while shaking right pom down

TURN IT WAY UP

INTRO	MOTION
1	Step forward with right foot and hit a T
2	Clap above head
3	T
4	Clap above head
5	T
6	Clap above head
7	Step back with hands on hips
8	Hold
EIGHT COUNT 1	MOTION
1	Stand on toes and wrap arms behind head
2	Squat with feet together -- (Ripple 2 starts)
3	(Ripple 2 ends) -- (Ripple 3 starts)
4	(Ripple 3 ends)
5	Everyone steps to the left in a high V
and	Break left arm
6	Left low V
7	Step to center and wrap left arm behind head
8	Clean
REPEAT EIGHT COUNT 3 MORE TIMES	

SECTION 3

PRACTICE DEVOTIONS

BIBLICAL THEME

IMAGE OF GOD

WEEK 1:	WHO AM I?	102
WEEK 2:	WHO MADE ME?	105
WEEK 3:	WHAT WAS I MADE FOR?	108
WEEK 4:	WHAT DO I STAND FOR?	111
WEEK 5:	WHAT WENT WRONG?	114
WEEK 6:	WHY IS MY WAY SO BAD?	117
WEEK 7:	WHAT IS GOD REALLY LIKE?	120
WEEK 8:	GOOD NEWS	123
WEEK 9:	WHAT HAPPENS NOW?	126
WEEK 10:	HOW SHOULD I TREAT OTHERS?	129
WEEK 11:	WHAT'S NEXT?	132

→ Devotions

As an Upward Coach, you are not only teaching skills for the sport but also values for life. The devotion time allows you to teach the character of Christ through a biblical theme. This season will focus on a theme which is taught in your practices and are highlighted by Bible verses. The chart below is designed to assist you as you organize and prepare for your devotions. It shows the biblical theme and verses for each group of practices.

PRACTICE NUMBER	BIBLICAL THEME	VERSE
Week 1	<i>Who Am I?</i>	O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. Psalm 139:1 (NLT)
Week 2	<i>Who Made Me?</i>	So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27 (NLT)
Week 3	<i>What Was I Made For?</i>	Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground. Genesis 1:28b (NLT)
Week 4	<i>What Do I Stand For?</i>	Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Ephesians 5:1 (NLT)
Week 5	<i>What Went Wrong?</i>	For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Romans 3:23 (NLT)

PRACTICE NUMBER	BIBLICAL THEME	VERSE
Week 6	<i>Why Is My Way So Bad?</i>	All the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes. Judges 21:25b (NLT)
Week 7	<i>What Is God Really Like?</i>	Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. Colossians 1:15a (NLT)
Week 8	<i>Good News</i>	Now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:21 (NLT)
Week 9	<i>What Happens Now?</i>	The Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. John 14:26b (NLT)
Week 10	<i>How Should I Treat Others?</i>	We love each other because he loved us first. 1 John 4:19
Week 11	<i>What's Next?</i>	But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. 1 John 3:2b (NLT)



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

In our devotions this season, we'll be answering some big questions as we explore what it means to be made in the image of God. This means introducing some deep theological concepts in a kid-friendly way. As we explore what the Bible teaches about the image of God, we'll learn about who we are, how we ought to live, our relationship with God, and our relationships with other people.

In this first devotion, we'll talk about why God can help us understand who we really are. He created us, He loves us, He knows everything about us, and He has a special purpose for us. Psalm 139 is a beautiful poem that captures the nature of God's intimate knowledge of us and all-encompassing presence with us. The athletes on your team will be challenged to think about who they are and learn that they can trust God to help them understand who they are. This will help set the scene for the idea of being made in the image of God that we'll look at throughout the rest of the season.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Psalm 139:1-18; Luke 12:6-7. *If you don't own a Bible, you can download the YouVersion Bible App for free.*



ENCOURAGEMENT

On bibleproject.com, search for "Image of God Biblical Theme" and watch the video. This video provides an excellent overview of what our devotions will cover this season.



COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How would I answer the question, "Who am I"?

Bible Translation Note: All Scripture quotations in this devotion track are taken from the New Living Translation (NLT) of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM

KEY VERSE

O Lord, you have examined my heart
and know everything about me.

Psalm 139:1 (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

God can help me
understand who I am.

ASK (All Ages): Who are you? If someone asked you that question, what would you say?

If someone asks who you are, you would probably tell them your name first. If you're at school and someone asks you who you are, you might add, "I'm in Mrs. Smith's class." If you're here for practice, you might say, "I'm on Coach Kyle's team." (*Use your own name.*)

But your name, what team you're on, what class you're in, or even who your family is—these things don't actually tell the full story of who you are, do they? There's so much more to you as a person than all these things. You've got memories and experiences, talents and abilities, your unique personality, the things you're passionate about—and so much more. It's not easy for any of us to really answer the question, "Who are you?"

To be honest, some people spend their whole lives trying to figure out who they are. It's a big question. But guess what? The Bible can help us answer it. The Bible is an ancient book that was written over the course of thousands of years by many different people. They were all inspired by God to write about His work throughout history and His plan for the world. The Bible is God's message to us to help us make sense of life. God wants to help us understand who we really are.

ASK (3rd Grade and up): How do you think the Bible is able to help answer questions that matter to us today when it was written so long ago?

You see, God created each of us. And the way He created us is special. He made us in His image. We'll be talking a lot more about that this season. But God also knows us better than anyone. He is always with us and knows everything about us.

There's a chapter of the Bible that talks about how well God knows each of us. It says: "O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord." (Psalm 139:1-4)

This chapter even goes on to say, "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb." (Psalm 139:13) And there's another verse in the Bible that says that God even knows how many hairs are on your head!

ASK (All Ages): How does it feel to think about how well God knows you? Do you think God knows you better than you know yourself?

If anyone knows who we are, it's God! And the Bible tells us that He has made us humans to be special and set apart. He has given us a special purpose. And His purpose can help us understand who we are. That's what we're going to be talking about this season.

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for bringing us together as a team. Please help us to have a great season. Thank You for giving us the Bible to help us learn more about You and about who we are. Open our minds and hearts so we can understand what it means to be made in the image of God. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 1" at the end of practice.

Note for Next Week: Bring a recent photo of yourself (it's okay if you show it from your phone).



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

What does the Bible mean when it says we are made in the image of God? We can look to the historical context in which the Old Testament was written to help answer this question. Kings in the Ancient Near East were often considered the “images” of their gods. They were representatives of the deities, which sometimes led to them claiming to be gods themselves. The other primary meaning for “image” in this context is in reference to the handmade idols that were deemed to be physical representations of the gods.

The Bible offers a completely different perspective. Rather than being represented by a single king who would lord his status over his subjects, or by powerless, inanimate objects, the one true God imbued one of His living creations with His image: human beings. And this image wasn't limited to one human—it was and is inherent in every human who has ever lived and who will ever live. To be made in God's image means that we are connected to our Creator in a special way and that He has given us certain attributes of His nature, as well as certain responsibilities of His position. To put it simply, being made in God's image means that all of us as humankind and each of us as individuals represent Him.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Genesis 1-2; Psalm 100:3.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Consider how vast, multifaceted, and beautiful the image of God is in comparison to the ancient gods who were supposed to be represented by kings or idols. The true God can't be represented by a wooden figurine or a single royal guy. He required a whole species to demonstrate His wonder and glory—yet even billions of people cannot fully portray the greatness of God.

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What comes to mind when I think about being made in the image of God?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM

KEY VERSE

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
Genesis 1:27 (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

God created me
in His image.

Note: *Bring a recent photo of yourself (it's okay if you show it from your phone).*

Most stories start at the beginning. The Bible starts at the very beginning. It says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) It goes on to tell about how God created light and darkness, day and night, sky and land and sea, the sun and moon, all the plants that grow on the earth, and fish and birds and all the animals. God created everything!

ASK (K-6th Grade): What is your favorite animal that God created?

Then, God created human beings. The Bible says, "Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.' So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:26-27)

ASK (3rd Grade and up): What stands out to you about what God says about humans?

God says we will rule over everything else. We'll talk more about that later this season. But right now, let's talk about something else God says here: that He made humans in His image.

ASK (All Ages): What is an image?

An image is a representation of something else. *(Show the photo of yourself.)* This is a photo of me. It's not me, but it looks like me, and it shows some things about what I look like. A video is also a type of image—just one that moves and has sound, too! A video of a person might show you more about them—but it's still just a representation. It's not the actual person.

ASK (All Ages): What do you think the Bible means when it says we are made in the image of God?

God made us to be like Him in ways that the rest of creation isn't. The second chapter of Genesis talks about how God breathed the breath of life into the first humans. They weren't like the other animals. God gave humans the ability to think and reason, to imagine and create, and to make decisions for themselves. This is what He made all of us humans to be like.

ASK (All Ages): How are we like God? How are we different from God?

God made us to be like Him in several ways, but we aren't exactly like Him. God is perfect and limitless. He has all knowledge and all power. He can be everywhere at once. He is eternal, which means He has always been and always will be. Even though God created us in His image, we still have to respect Him as the one who created us, and who is still much, much, much greater than we could ever be.

It's a great privilege to be made in God's image. That means we represent Him in the world. We represent Him in how we relate to the rest of creation and how we relate to each other. That's a big responsibility. And we'll talk more about what that all means throughout the rest of the season.

For now, I want you to remember two things. First, God created you in His image, and second, you matter to God and He made you for a purpose.

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for all of creation—for this amazing, wonderful universe You made. Thank You for making each and every one of us in Your image. Help us to remember that we matter and that You made us for a purpose. We love You, Lord. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 2" at the end of practice.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

In this devotion, we'll use the metaphor of a garden to help explain what it means for us to "reign over" the rest of creation as representatives of God. As a good ruler or leader helps their people flourish, and a good gardener helps their garden flourish, God has given all of us the task of bringing the best out of His creation and promoting the best for His creation.

This idea is seen most clearly in Genesis 1:28, when God blesses the first humans, a man and a woman, and gives them the famous directive to "be fruitful and multiply," as well as to rule over the creatures of the earth. "With the blessing comes the ability to be fruitful and to rule. In procreation they will share in the divine work of creating human life and passing on the divine image . . . in ruling they will serve as God's vice-regents on earth. They together, the human race collectively, have the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of that which is put under them and the privilege of using it for their benefit."
(NET Bible Notes on Genesis 1:28)

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Genesis 1-2.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"God is not usually visible, so he appoints humans to remind creation and each other of his presence. Because God rules the world, our representative role includes ruling on God's behalf."

Carmen Joy Imes, Being God's Image: Why Creation Still Matters

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Have I ever considered that God has given me a responsibility to reign over His creation? What does that look like for me?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM
KEY VERSE

Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.

Genesis 1:28b (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

God gave me a purpose.

Raise your hand if you've ever planted anything. Maybe it was some flowers or vegetables or a whole garden. The way things grow is so amazing. You can plant the seed and then tend to the plant over time. You can make sure it has the right amount of water and sunlight and do your best to protect it from weeds, bugs, or bunnies. And, if you're patient, you'll see it grow—probably into something beautiful or delicious. How awesome is that?

The Bible tells us that when God made the first humans, Adam and Eve, He gave them a wonderful garden to live in called the Garden of Eden. It was filled with plants and trees that grew fruits and vegetables, and all kinds of animals. And since God had made Adam and Eve in His image, to be like Him and to represent Him, He gave them an important job.

The Bible says, "Then God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.'" (Genesis 1:28) God gave humans the job of reigning over, or ruling, the earth.

ASK (All Ages): What do you think it means to rule over the earth?

Sometimes, we might think of ruling as someone having lots of power and doing whatever they want. But let's think about where Adam and Eve were when God gave them this task. They weren't in a castle; they were in the garden! For them, reigning over their world looked like being awesome gardeners. God had created this beautiful place, and now He had given humans the job of taking care of what He had created.

Now, it's been a long time since Adam and Eve, and humans don't live in the Garden of Eden anymore. But the job that God gave the first humans is the same job He gives to each of us. He is trusting us to take care of His creation.

ASK (All Ages): What do you think it looks like for us to take care of what God created?

Let's think about what a gardener does again. They tend to plants, trusting that God will help things grow. They harvest the fruits and vegetables that grow to be used for food. They plant new seeds to see new things grow.

God wants us all to rule the world and take care of His creation a lot like that. And I don't just mean planting flowers, growing vegetables, or caring for the environment. Those are all great

things we can do, but we can also be great gardeners in other ways, too.

We can tend to God's creation by caring for other people, who are also part of God's creation and are made in His image. We can harvest good things by using the gifts God has given us to do more good in the world. We can plant new seeds by creating amazing new things out of what God has already created: things like new inventions, new songs, and new communities. God created all of us to have creativity, and there are countless ways we can help shape the world He is trusting us to rule.

ASK (K-6th Grade): What is the purpose God has given every human?

ASK (7th Grade and up): The truth is that humans reign over the world in both good and bad ways. What are some of the bad ways? What are some of the good ways?

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for allowing us to be part of Your work in the world. Please help us to be good rulers and gardeners of Your creation. Show us what it looks like to care for the world You created. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 3" at the end of practice.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

If we want to represent God well, we will get to know Him and His priorities. We will do our best to make decisions based on His standards and desires for His creation. We rule best by emulating His character. God is good; He is perfect, He is just, He is loving, He is faithful, and so much more. The blueprint for how we are to fulfill our purpose as those made in God's image is God Himself, specifically as He revealed Himself through Jesus (which we'll discuss in Practice 7).

Most of us are used to living for ourselves, ruling over our own little kingdoms. But if we remember our true purpose, to reign on behalf of God and represent Him well, we will do as the Bible says and "seek the Kingdom of God above all else." (Matthew 6:33) That means looking for the ways in our own lives that we can represent God well through our behavior and character.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Ephesians 5:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 2 Peter 1:3-5; Psalm 1:1-3; Micah 6:8.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

Romans 12:2

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How can I better reflect God's character in my daily life?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM

KEY VERSE

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do,
because you are his dear children.

Ephesians 5:1 (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can reflect the
character of God.

We've been talking about how we are all made in God's image and how God has given us the important job of representing Him and ruling over His creation. We've talked a little about what that looks like, but today, I want to talk more about *how* we should go about ruling creation.

ASK (All Ages): What does the word *character* mean?

When I say the word *character*, you might think of some of your favorite characters from movies or video games. But character can also mean who you are and how you behave. If someone has good character, they're probably someone other people look up to because they make good choices. If someone has a bad character, they're probably a bad influence because they don't make great choices. We decide what kind of character we have by the decisions we make every day.

And guess what? Part of being made in God's image means we are supposed to reflect His character. When we are thinking about how we should represent Him, a big part of that is making decisions based on what God says is good and what He says is evil, rather than just making decisions based on what we want to do. Remember, God is perfect, and He created the whole universe. We can trust Him to know what's really right and what's really wrong, and we can get a good idea of God's definition of right and wrong by studying the Bible.

God is good, kind, and holy. He has given us a job to do, and He wants us to take that responsibility seriously. Let's think about some examples of what it might look like to rule over creation in a way that reflects God's character.

You have trash to throw away at the park. The garbage can is a whole football field away. You know that if you leave your trash on the ground, it will either be littering or someone else will have to pick it up.

ASK (All Ages): How can you reflect God's character in caring for the world He made in this situation?

Your little sister accidentally slammed her fingers in the car door as she was getting in. You're really excited to get to your game, but she is crying.

ASK (All Ages): How can you reflect God's character in this situation?

Someone in your class at school showed you an easy way to cheat on an assignment.

ASK (All Ages): How can you reflect God's character in this situation?

God knows we're not perfect. We won't always make the right decisions. Sometimes, we'll choose what we want or what is easiest instead of what's right. But God still wants us to try our best to make good decisions and reflect His character.

There's a famous quote from the *Spider-Man* comics and movies that says this: "With great power comes great responsibility." We're not superheroes, but God has trusted us to reign over and take care of His creation. That's a great power and privilege. But, along with that, we have a great responsibility to make good choices and to represent God as well as we can.

LET'S PRAY

God, please help us reflect Your character. We want to make decisions that honor You. We want to do what is right according to You, not according to our own ideas. Help us to take our responsibility as Your representatives seriously. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

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PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 4" at the end of practice.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

Any observation of the world around us can tell us that the idyllic world of Genesis 1-2 didn't last. Genesis 3 explains why. Humanity chose their own plans, purposes, and preferences over their Creator's. Instead of ruling on His behalf and tending to His creation as His representatives, Adam and Eve chose to live for themselves, according to their ways rather than God's. And the rest of humankind has followed in their footsteps.

Bible scholars hold different viewpoints about how exactly the fall of humanity in Genesis 3 affected the status of humans as made in the image of God. It isn't addressed directly in the text. Some scholars say the image was lost or damaged. However, passages in both the Old and New Testaments (including Genesis 5:1-3 and 9:6) indicate that humans never lost their status as God's image-bearers. At the same time, our ability to represent Him and reflect His character is grievously altered—as is our relationship with Him.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Genesis 3; Romans 3:23; Romans 8:19-22.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"There is ample discussion and documentation in the Bible regarding the destructive impact of sin on people. Yet at the same time there is every indication that people remain 'in God's image'—that no harm has been done to this status or to the image on which it is based. People retain a special connection with God (though their relationship with God is badly damaged), and God still intends for people to reflect likenesses to God (though in actuality they largely fail to do so). The image of God is the standard of who people are created to be—embodied in the person of Christ—and that standard is not diminished in any way because of sin."

John F. Kilner, Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Do I take sin seriously? Why or why not?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM**KEY VERSE**

For everyone has sinned; we all
fall short of God's glorious standard.

Romans 3:23 (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

Sin has big
consequences.

This season, we've been talking about how the Bible tells us we are all made in the image of God. That's pretty awesome. But, sadly, just two chapters later in the Bible, we find out some really bad news. When it comes to following God and living in a way that represents Him well, humans are going to mess up big time.

Remember how I told you that God gave the first humans, Adam and Eve, a beautiful garden to live in? Well, in that garden, there were all these plants and trees that produced plenty of good food for Adam and Eve to enjoy. There was just one tree in the whole garden that God told them not to eat from. Unfortunately, one day, they decided to eat from that tree, even though God had told them not to. They disobeyed God, and sin entered the world.

ASK (All Ages): What is sin?

Sin is when we disobey God. It's when we choose to do things our way instead of His way. The tree in the garden that Adam and Eve weren't supposed to eat from was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. When they decided to eat from that tree, it meant they wanted to decide for themselves what was right and what was wrong. Instead of following the ways of the Creator of the universe, they wanted to follow their own way instead.

ASK (3rd Grade and up): Why do the choices we make matter to God?

Imagine that your birthday party is coming up. On the day your mom was going to take you shopping for all the party supplies, you twist your ankle and can't go. So, you send your brother to go as your representative and help your mom pick out all the things you want. But, instead of the chocolate cake you like, he picks out vanilla. And, instead of the Marvel party favors you wanted, he picks out Super Mario Brothers party favors. Instead of sour cream and onion chips, he gets barbeque chips. You get the picture.

ASK (All Ages): Would your brother be a very good representative in this scenario? Why or why not?

Now, this probably wouldn't happen because your mom would probably have you make a list of the things you wanted. But it helps give us an idea of what it's like when we decide to do things our way instead of God's way.

God knows what's best—for us and for all of creation. It doesn't make much sense for us to

ignore what He says is right and good and make up our own rules. But we do—all of us. Not just Adam and Eve. In one way or another, we all choose our way over God’s way. The Bible says, “Everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.” (Romans 3:23)

ASK (All Ages): So, if we all sin, what do you think that means for how we represent God?

If we decide we don’t want to represent God and His character well, we really aren’t being very good at the purpose He gave us. And there are big consequences for this. Because Adam and Eve sinned, God banished them from the Garden of Eden. They would have to work a lot harder to survive. They also wouldn’t live forever. The biggest consequence of sin is death. All humans die because all humans sin.

There were big consequences for the rest of creation when Adam and Eve sinned, too. Plants and animals die and decay. Droughts and floods and fires and storms and earthquakes wreck the land. Pollution fills the air and the water. The Bible says that creation groans because of sin. It’s not good. But, thankfully, that’s not the end of the story. Because the Bible also says that “all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.” (Romans 8:19)

There’s still hope for us to be a lot better at representing God. We’ll talk more about that later this season.

LET’S PRAY

God, we admit that we all sin. We all choose to do things our way instead of your way. Please help us look to You to help us make decisions instead of making up what’s right and wrong for ourselves. We want to honor You, Lord. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 5” at the end of practice.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

The song “My Way” might have been a big hit for Frank Sinatra, but the truth is that looking back and saying you did things your way is not the triumph we think it is. God created us in His image, but He did not make us gods. We don’t have the wisdom, or the power, or the goodness, or the perfection that He has. Yes, He created us with much capacity for these things, but we don’t come close to Him. In Isaiah 55:9, God says, “For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways.”

It doesn’t take long after Genesis 3 to see the consequences of Adam and Eve’s decision to choose their way over God’s way. In Genesis 4, one of their sons murders his own brother. By Genesis 6-9, human wickedness had reached such a height that God floods the earth and spares only one family. The rest of the book tells story after story of people’s failure next to God’s faithfulness. Of course, Genesis is somewhat tame compared to the depravity found in Judges, the book we get our key verse from for this devotion. Ultimately, the Bible makes it clear that humans doing things our way always means we end up going in the wrong direction. Meanwhile, trusting in God and His ways leads us on the right path—a path to life, hope, and flourishing.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Judges 21:25; Isaiah 55:8-9; Mark 7:1-23.

ENCOURAGEMENT

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Which do I trust more: my way or God’s way?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM

KEY VERSE

All the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.
Judges 21:25b (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

Doing things my way
instead of God's way
is a bad idea.

This season, we've learned that all humans are made in the image of God. That means God has made us His representatives on earth and given us a purpose—to care for His creation. Unfortunately, we all follow in the footsteps of Adam and Eve, the first humans, and we all choose to decide for ourselves what is good and what is evil. Instead of representing God and ruling over creation the way He wants us to, we choose to represent ourselves and rule over creation the way we want to.

ASK (All Ages): Why is God's way better than our way?

Imagine for a moment that in an NFL game, one of the players decides he is sick and tired of playing by the rules of football. So, he goes out onto the field and does things the way he wants to—whatever that looks like. He refuses to give the ball to his quarterback, pushes the opposing team down between plays, and ignores the ref's whistle and won't stop running after the play is over. He leaves the field in the middle of a drive and comes back later—on a motorcycle! He does donuts and wheelies on the field, so no one else can play. Then he declares himself the only winner!

ASK (All Ages): What would happen if someone actually did that? Would they ever get to play in an NFL game again? Why not?

This is kind of what it's like when we decide to live by our own rules instead of God's. God created the universe. He knows how everything works. He made everything for a purpose. He knows what is really right and what is really wrong. He makes the rules because He invented the game! Just like it would be crazy for a professional football player to decide the rules of the game don't matter, it's crazy for us to decide that God's rules don't matter. But sadly, this is still something we all do all the time.

In the Bible, there's a book called Judges that tells about a very chaotic time in the history of God's people. The Bible says that during this time, "all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." (Judges 21:25) The stories in this book show that every time the people trusted in themselves and what they wanted, instead of trusting in God and what He wanted, things did not go well for them. Things only got worse and worse.

ASK (All Ages): What are some things people might do when they are only looking out for themselves and what they want?

That's the opposite of what God wants for us. He wants us to make things better. He wants us to be gardeners, remember? He wants us to plant and grow and create and build good things. We do that by trusting in Him, listening to what He says is right and wrong, and obeying Him.

Sometimes, it feels like we're stuck because we can't really get out of this situation on our own. We all sin. We all take after Adam and Eve. We all want to do things our way instead of God's way. But guess what? There's hope for us. For all of us. And we're going to talk about that next time.

LET'S PRAY

God, we know that Your way is better than our way. We're sorry that we often do what seems right in our eyes rather than paying attention to what You've said is right. Help us look to You for how we should live. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 6" at the end of practice.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

God came to earth. Sometimes, we get desensitized to the significance of this statement. But the truth is, it's huge. Mind-bending. Ground-shaking. Reality-altering. Huge. When we humans decided to trust in ourselves and our ways over God and His ways, God knew that He wasn't going to let us go that easily. When we refused to represent Him well as His image, He knew He would show up Himself and make it clear who He really is. But He didn't show up draped in gold and fire and flanked by armies of angels. Instead, He showed up draped in swaddling clothes and flanked by farm animals. He was born to a humble family and lived in poverty.

Through Jesus, God revealed Himself to be so different from what we would expect someone with ultimate power and authority to be. He revealed Himself to be loving, caring, kind, humble, and sacrificial. He "came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) Through Jesus, we learn that the image of God, which we were created to be, is very different from the image that humans have chosen for ourselves.

Our key verse for this devotion comes from Colossians 1, in a section that might have been taken from an early Christian hymn. It beautifully and clearly describes the nature of Jesus as God's perfect image. "According to Colossians 1:15, Christ fulfills God's image-related intentions by holding together all of creation (v. 17), serving as head of the church (v. 18), and reconciling all things to God (v. 20). As Jesus frequently said, he was about promoting a kingdom (or better, a rulership), one in which God's values and ways were manifest. Jesus' life, culminating most prominently in his death, illustrates the servant-leadership kind of rulership that God intends." (John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God*)

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Colossians 1:15-20; Mark 10:35-45; John 1:1-18; Hebrews 1:1-3; Philippians 2:5-11.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son . . . No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us."

John 1:14-18

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

How much do I know about Jesus?
How can I learn more about who He is?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM
KEY VERSE

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.
Colossians 1:15a (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus is the perfect
image of God.

Even though God created each of us in His image, to be His representatives on earth, we don't do a very good job of representing Him because of sin. When we think about this, it might make us feel hopeless, like we should just give up. But guess what? God doesn't want us to give up because He hasn't given up on us. In fact, God did something amazing to help sort all this out.

God—the Creator of the universe, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords—came to earth Himself. He came to earth to be with us and show us what He is really like. And when He did this, it changed everything.

You see, God is *one being* made up of *three persons*: the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. They are all equal, and they are all fully God. If that's hard to understand, don't worry—it's hard for grown-ups to understand, too! The Father, Spirit, and Son make up what we call the Trinity. When God came to earth, it was the Son, Jesus Christ, who came. So, Jesus was the Son of God, but He was also God Himself. If that blows your mind a little bit, it's okay!

ASK (All Ages): Why is it a big deal for God to come to earth?

When Jesus came to earth about 2,000 years ago, He was born as a baby to a human mother—just like all of us. He was fully God, but He was also fully human. He grew up in a small town on the other side of the world. He walked, talked, laughed, cried, ate, slept, and much more. He trained in the family business, which was building things. Then, when He was thirty years old, Jesus knew that it was time to start really showing the world who God is.

Jesus started traveling around to the villages in His country, teaching people about God in a way no one had ever heard before. He spoke about God like He knew what He was talking about—because He did! He even started doing things that were only possible through the power of God. Sick people were brought to Him, and He healed them. His boat was caught in a storm on the lake, and He calmed it. Hungry crowds came to listen to His teaching, and He fed them with just one boy's lunch. He cared for the poor and welcomed the outcasts. He even made time to answer the questions of people who disagreed with Him. Jesus did all these things and much more!

ASK (All Ages): What do you think it would have been like to know Jesus in person?

During all this time, His whole life on earth, Jesus never sinned. He always did things God's way because He was God. Jesus was the perfect image of God. If the rest of humanity is the blurry,

cracked mirror that is supposed to reflect who God is, Jesus is the completely smudge-free mirror that actually gives us a crystal-clear view of God. The Bible says that “Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.” (Colossians 1:15)

ASK (7th Grade and up): What does it mean for Jesus to be the visible image of the invisible God?

Let’s think back to the purpose God gave us as people who are made in His image. Remember, we are supposed to be like gardeners. Jesus was the perfect gardener and the perfect caretaker of God’s creation. He tended to the people around Him, caring about them and helping them. When they needed physical healing, He healed their bodies. When they needed compassion, He felt for them. When they needed forgiveness, He forgave them. When they needed to be accepted, He included them. When they needed food, He fed them. Jesus showed what God cares about. And God cares about people.

ASK (All Ages): What do Jesus’ actions teach us about God?

ASK (3rd Grade and up): What do Jesus’ actions teach us about how we can be better representatives of who God is?

Jesus said that He “came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) It might seem a little crazy that the Creator of the universe came to earth to serve us, rather than to show us who’s boss. But that’s what God did. Next time, we’ll talk about just how far God was willing to go to help us.

LET’S PRAY

God, thank You so much for sending Jesus to show us who You really are. Thank You for how You love and care for us. May every person here come to know Jesus well and learn how to reflect Jesus to the world around them. We love You, Lord. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 7” at the end of practice.



This week's devotion includes a gospel presentation.

SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

This important devotion will pick up where the last one left off. Jesus came to earth to show us who God is, as the perfect image of God. But He didn't just show us who we ought to be as representatives of our Creator. Through His death and resurrection, He made it possible for us to overcome the consequences of sin and death so we could become who we were created to be. He made a way for us to get back on the right trajectory. He rescued us from death and redeemed us for eternal life.

In Romans 5:15-17, the apostle Paul contrasts the sin of Genesis 3 with God's gift of Himself in Jesus. He writes, "There is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift . . . For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ."

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read Romans 5:12-21; Romans 6:20-23; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; John 19-20.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"Jesus did not just die a natural death. His was the death of self-giving love. In his death, Jesus showed us what it is to be truly human . . . Jesus' death was the culmination of humanity's purpose. He was 'obedient unto death'—refusing to cling to power or autonomy (see Philippians 2:8). Faced with the same choice as the first humans, Jesus conquered sin and death by facing it head-on and receiving the judgment that humanity deserved. He did so willingly, taking on the full penalty of human rebellion as our representative. This act of self-sacrifice finally repairs the brokenness of the garden."

Carmen Joy Imes, Being God's Image: Why Creation Still Matters

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Have I trusted in Jesus' sacrifice and asked God for forgiveness through Him? Why or why not?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM

KEY VERSE

Now God's wonderful grace rules instead,
giving us right standing with God and resulting
in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Romans 5:21b (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus made a way
for us to have
eternal life with God.

ASK (All Ages): Have you ever faced a consequence for disobeying your parents? What happened, and what was the consequence?

When Adam and Eve, the first humans, disobeyed God and ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, there were a lot of consequences. One consequence was that God banned them from the Garden of Eden. You see, there was another tree in the garden that Adam and Eve could no longer eat from now that they had disobeyed God. It was the Tree of Life. As long as they ate from the Tree of Life, they would never die.

Sadly, Adam and Eve chose to trust in themselves instead of in God. And when God banned them from the Garden, they no longer had access to the Tree of Life. Now, one day, they would die. The same goes for us. Because we all choose our way instead of God's way—because we all sin—we will all die. And the ultimate consequence of sin is death and separation from God.

ASK (All Ages): God is perfect and holy. Why do you think sin separates us from Him?

The Bible talks about this when it says that “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

Wait a minute. If we all die because of sin, what does the Bible mean when it talks about a free gift of eternal life? Well, last time I told you about Jesus and how He came to earth to show us who God really is. He did many amazing things, but there's more to the story. Here's what happened.

As Jesus was teaching, traveling, performing miracles, and helping people, He gained some followers—people who traveled with Him to learn closely from Him. But He also gained some enemies. These people did not believe Jesus was really God. They felt threatened by Him, so they had Him arrested, even though He had done nothing wrong. He was sentenced to death and nailed to a wooden cross. He died a painful death and was buried in a tomb.

But three days later, something incredible happened. Some of Jesus' followers went to the tomb and found that it was empty. Suddenly, Jesus appeared to them! He was alive! For forty days after that, He spent time with His followers, continuing to teach them about God. Then, He returned to heaven, where He is still alive today!

ASK (All Ages): What do you think this tells us about Jesus?

Because Jesus was the perfect Son of God, when He died, He took the punishment for all our sins on Himself. It would be like if your older brother or sister took the punishment for you when you were the one who disobeyed your parents—except what Jesus did is a way bigger deal! Jesus took the consequence of *everyone's* sins on Himself. The Bible says, “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

But Jesus didn't just take our punishment. When Jesus rose back to life, He also defeated sin and death forever. He made a way for us to be made right with God. When we trust in what Jesus has done for us and ask God to forgive us for our sins through Him, God will forgive us completely. Though we still die one day, after we die, we will go to live with God forever. That's eternal life. There's another Bible verse that says, “So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5:21)

ASK (All Ages): How does it make you feel to think about what Jesus did for you?

When we trust in Jesus and turn back to God's way instead of our own way, God not only gives us the amazing gift of eternal life, but He also gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to live in us and helps us to grow more like Jesus and become better representatives of who God is. That's what we'll talk about more next time.

LET'S PRAY

God, please forgive us for disobeying You. Forgive us for choosing our way over Your way. Thank You for sending Jesus to give us a clear view of who You are and to save us from sin and death. Help everyone here to put their trust and faith in Him. We love You, Lord. Amen.

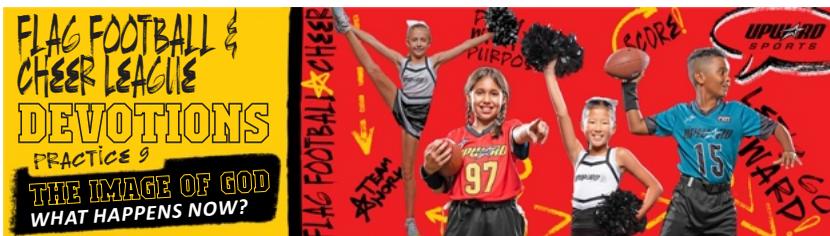
If someone has questions about following Jesus, let your League Director know and ask them about the follow-up process for your league. Also let the parents know their child is asking questions. If the family does not attend church, this would be a great opportunity to invite them to come to church with you.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled “Practice 8” at the end of practice.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

Your journey of faith isn't over once you believe in Jesus. In fact, that's just the beginning. God still wants us to rule over creation as His representatives—according to His image found in Christ, not the image we claimed for ourselves. When we trust in Christ for redemption, we regain the ability to live up to our potential as beings created in the image of God—through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. Still, this doesn't happen at the flip of a switch. It's a process. And in this life, in a creation still marred by sin, we will still fall short. We will still fail to represent God well and live up to His purposes for us. We will still choose our way over His way sometimes.

But, if we are in Christ, the Holy Spirit is working in us to make us more and more like Him—the perfect image of God—so that one day, in God's new creation, we will be who we were truly meant to be. "As has always been the case, God intends for people today to reflect attributes of God. However, in Jesus Christ humanity receives a clearer understanding of what that can look like. People are to follow the example and pattern of Jesus. In Jesus they see modeled not only excellence in the abstract, but also what that looks like in a fallen world. Before attributes excel in the new heaven and earth, they grow in the midst of weakness and suffering." (John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God*)

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read John 14:15-27; Galatians 5:16-26; John 1:1-14; 2 Corinthians 3:16-18.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."

2 Corinthians 3:16-18

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

Have I seen the Holy Spirit at work in my life? What does that look like?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM

KEY VERSE

The Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.
John 14:26b (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

When I believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit will help me become more like Him.

When Jesus came to earth, He showed us what it really means to be the image of God.

ASK (All Ages): What can we learn about God by looking at Jesus?

Jesus is the perfect representation of who God is because Jesus is God. The Bible says, “So the Word” (meaning Jesus) “became human and made his home among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.” (John 1:14)

If that’s true, then that means that the way Jesus lived while He was on earth shows us the way we should have been living all along. Jesus is the blueprint for what it means to be the image of God and to represent Him well. We should follow His example.

ASK (All Ages): What are some ways we can follow Jesus’ example in our daily lives?

When we believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. The Holy Spirit is just as much God as Jesus is! The Holy Spirit reminds us of what Jesus has said and guides us to do what Jesus would do. Over time, if we listen to and obey the Holy Spirit, He will help us grow to be more and more like Jesus. Which means we will grow to be better and better representatives of God.

But what does that really look like? The Bible says that there are things that we can look out for that show us that the Spirit is working in our lives. If the Spirit is at work, there will be results! In fact, the Bible calls these things fruit—which might remind you of our garden idea from earlier this season.

The Bible says, “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” (Galatians 5:22-23)

These are the things we can look out for in our lives. For example, you might realize that you have been able to be more patient with your younger brother lately. That might be evidence that you are listening to the Holy Spirit’s guidance. On the other hand, if you realize you’re having a hard time being patient with your little brother, that might be a clue for you to pay more attention to what the Holy Spirit is telling you and to be intentional about learning to be more patient.

ASK (All Ages): The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Which of the things on this list sounds easiest for you? Which sounds the most difficult?

Remember, if we want to look for an example of these things, we can look to Jesus! He is perfectly loving, peaceful, patient, and all the rest! If we want to become better representatives of God, we should get to know more about who Jesus is by reading about Him in the Bible and listening to the Spirit as He guides us to become more like Jesus.

ASK (3rd Grade and up): How do you think following Jesus' example might change your life?

Even after we believe in Jesus and have the Holy Spirit working to make us more like Him, we still won't be perfect at these things. We still live with the consequences of sin all around us. Don't get down if you mess up a lot—we all do! Instead, know that God is so happy to see you growing. He is always working in your life, even when you can't see it. Trust in Him and do your best to follow Him. He already loves you more than you could ever imagine, and you can't do anything to make Him love you any more or any less.

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to help us become more like Jesus. Teach us to pay attention and obey His guidance. Help us to learn more and more about who You are, and become more and more like You as we live our lives. We want to represent You well. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 9" at the end of practice.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

One of the most significant practical applications of a study of the image of God is not only recognizing what this means for our own value and purpose but also for how we ought to treat our fellow humans. It is not just *some* humans who meet certain criteria who are representatives of God and rulers on His behalf—it is all of us. It is a status not based on our attributes or even on how well we represent God through our character, but on the inherent connection we have with our Creator and the dignity that gives us as those who reflect His glory. As Psalm 8 says, “What are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.” (Psalm 8:4-5)

So, to embrace the purpose God has given us to be good rulers of His creation in the pattern of His perfect image, Jesus Christ, means we will see people as He saw them and treat people as He treated them. It calls us to love others as He has loved us and to love our neighbors as ourselves—understanding that anyone and everyone can be our neighbor. Self-giving love is how we tend to creation with the care of the Creator who gave Himself for us.

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read 1 John 4:7-19; Mark 12:28-34; John 13:1-17, 34-35; Psalm 8.

ENCOURAGEMENT

“After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, ‘Do you understand what I was doing? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you are right, because that’s what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”

John 13:12-15

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What is something I can do to follow Jesus’ example of loving and serving others?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM**KEY VERSE**

We love each other because he loved us first.
1 John 4:19

BOTTOM LINE

I want to follow Jesus' example of loving others.

We can represent God well by following Jesus' example and listening to the Holy Spirit as He guides us to become more like Jesus. One of the best ways to follow Jesus' example is to treat people the way He treated them.

ASK (All Ages): How did Jesus treat people?

Jesus spent time teaching people so that they would know the truth about God and life. He cared and showed compassion for people who were hurting. He healed the sick. He loved people so much that He was willing to go to the cross and die so that we could all be rescued from sin and death and no longer be separated from God. And He still loves us today. He loves each of us more than we can imagine.

The truth is that love is the key to living like Jesus and representing God well. One time, Jesus was asked what the most important commandment in the Old Testament was. He answered, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)

So, Jesus summed it up like this: the most important things we can do in life are to love God and love people. When you think about it, this makes sense. God created us, loves us, and even sent Jesus to die for us. We should love Him with all we are.

ASK (All Ages): It's easy for us to see why we should love God. But why is it important for us to love people, too?

Remember, all people are created in God's image. They all have value, worth, and dignity. They all deserve to be treated with respect. We should never treat another person as worthless or less than. They represent God! That's why Jesus says we should love our neighbors—meaning anyone we meet—as we love ourselves. We should treat others the way we want to be treated.

ASK (All Ages): What are some examples of NOT treating other people like they are created in God's image? What do you think that looks like?

The truth is, when anyone treats someone else as less valuable than they are, it can lead to really bad things—like violence, poverty, and slavery. When people believe other people are less valuable than they are, they might act like it gives them an excuse to hurt, ignore, or use

other people for their own benefit. We know that Jesus came to serve others, and when we decide it's more important for others to serve us, we are doing the opposite of representing God well.

This is why it's so important for us to remember that every single person—no matter who they are, where they come from, what they look like, how old or young they are, how smart they are, how much money they have, what their strengths or weaknesses are, or what they believe—every single person is created in the image of God. It doesn't matter what someone can or can't do or how much they do or don't achieve. No one is more valuable or less valuable than anyone else. We are all worth so much because we are all valuable to and loved by God.

ASK (All Ages): What are some examples of treating people like they ARE created in the image of God? What does it look like to love your neighbor as yourself?

We all have times when it's easier to love the people around us and times when it's more difficult. There's a short but sweet Bible verse you can try to memorize to help you remember to love others. First John 4:19 says, "We love each other because he loved us first." That sums it up pretty well! When we realize how much God loves us, it makes us want to love other people.

LET'S PRAY

God, thank You for Jesus' example of love, kindness, and service. Help us to love the people around us and treat them with value because they are created in the image of God, just as we are. We love You, Lord. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 10" at the end of practice.



SCOUTING REPORT | COACHES, HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S DEVOTION

BACKGROUND

What happens after we die is a weighty topic, and there is much mystery to it. The Bible isn't clear on many details, and different Bible scholars and even whole denominations of Christians believe different things about what exactly will happen after we die, what will happen in the last days, and the order of it all. Yet, a study of what the Bible has to say about the image of God would not be complete without addressing this subject.

This season, the athletes on your team have learned what it means to be made in the image of God. Now, they will hear that this status doesn't just apply to their time on earth—it has implications for eternity. The Bible tells us that, one day, God will restore His creation in a new heavens and a new earth. Through Christ, who is the firstfruits of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20 CSB), we will be resurrected to live out our true purpose in the presence of God.

The Bible ends with a glorious picture of what will one day be our home: the new creation and the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21-22). "The final chapters of John's vision in Revelation unveil our glorious future. Rather than humans going up to heaven, heaven comes down to us, in the form of a cubic garden city, the new Jerusalem. Heaven and earth intersect again at last. Human civilization will finally be good rather than characterized by exploitative power and greed . . . It is here that we will be our truest human selves, exercising our role as God's image, stewarding creation by ruling it well and serving our Maker." (Carmen Joy Imes, *Being God's Image: Why Creation Still Matters*)

BIG PICTURE

For more insight, read 1 John 3:1-3; Romans 8:18-39; Revelation 21:1-7; Revelation 22:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:42-58.

ENCOURAGEMENT

By coaching this team this season, you have been tending to God's creation. You have invested in the lives of the athletes on your team in a significant way. You've helped them learn new skills, taught them important truths from God's word, and been a positive role model in their lives. Who knows how this season will impact these young people made in the image of God in the years to come! Whether you realized it or not, you have been living out your purpose. Take a moment to thank God for this team and this season, and ask Him to show you what other opportunities you have in your life to follow Jesus' example and represent Him well.

COACH'S QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

What comes to mind when I think about life after death?

PRACTICE DEVOTION | SHARE THIS WITH YOUR TEAM**KEY VERSE**

But we do know that we will be like him,
for we will see him as he really is.

1 John 3:2b (NLT)

BOTTOM LINE

I can look forward to
eternal life with God.

ASK (All Ages): Based on what you've learned this season, what does it mean to be made in the image of God?

Every person was created by God in His image, including you and me. That means you are super special and incredibly valuable. You are made to reflect God in certain ways and to represent Him. That's a huge deal! We've talked about what that has meant in the past and what it means for our lives today, but now I want to talk a little bit more about what that means for the future.

The Bible tells us that if we trust in Jesus and what He has done for us by dying on the cross and rising again, after we die, we will live with God forever. The Bible says, "No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)

ASK (All Ages): How does it make you feel to know that nothing can separate you from God's love?

When you die, you will go to heaven to be with God. We don't know exactly what heaven will be like, but I can tell you it won't be sitting on clouds and playing harps like you might see in movies and cartoons. What we do know about heaven is that it will be good and wonderful because we will be with God!

The Bible also says that one day, we will live in a new, restored creation without sin. It's kind of like the new Garden of Eden. Only this time, because of what Jesus has done, we'll get to stay there forever. In this new creation, God still wants us to have a purpose—the purpose He gave us at the very beginning. He wants us to rule and tend to His creation. But this time, we'll really be able to represent Him well, because we will be made like Jesus. First John 3:2 says, "Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is."

We will have glorified, resurrected bodies like Jesus had after He rose from the dead. We will choose God's way instead of our way. We will eat from the Tree of Life and live forever. The Bible says, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." (Revelation 21:4) God will make all things new, and everything that's wrong with the world will be made right.

ASK (All Ages): What's something that you might look forward to about living in the new

creation?

ASK (7th Grade and up): What do you think it will be like to truly be able to fulfill your purpose as someone created in the image of God?

In the meantime, while we're still in this life, God still wants us to live out our purpose as best we can. He wants us to let the Holy Spirit guide us and help us grow to be more like Jesus. He wants us to care for the world He created according to His ways and not our ways. He wants us to love other people and treat them with respect, no matter who they are, because all people are made in His image. Remember, God made you, He loves you, and He gave you the job of representing Him.

LET'S PRAY

God, we owe everything to You. Thank You for making us in Your image. Thank You for giving us a purpose and choosing us to represent You. We don't know exactly what the future will look like after we die, but we trust You, and we look forward to living in Your presence and experiencing the new creation where we will truly be able to live for You. We love You, Lord. Amen.

GREEN PRACTICE STAR REMINDER

If your league uses green practice stars, remember to distribute one to every athlete at the end of practice.

PRACTICE CARD REMINDER

If your league uses practice cards, remember to distribute the practice cards entitled "Practice 11" at the end of practice.

SECTION 4

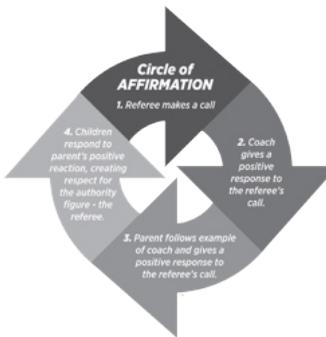
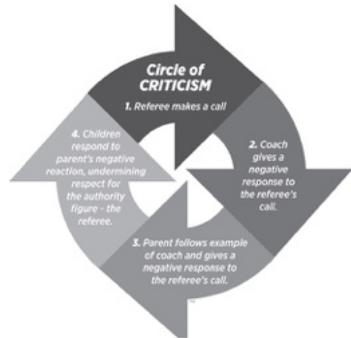
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Circle of Affirmation

Choosing the right game day attitude is key to being an effective Upward Cheer Coach. Actions and reactions during games can either open or close the door to ministry. The Circle of Criticism and the Circle of Affirmation are simple diagrams that illustrate the results of a coach giving a referee either negative or positive feedback.

Coaches and referees work together as a unified team for everyone to have a great experience. Coaches stop the Circle of Criticism by starting the Circle of Affirmation.



The Circle of Affirmation goes beyond the referee. A coach's affirmation of players inspires encouragement and praise from parents, family members and other players. Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game a better experience for everyone.

Practicing the Circle of Affirmation makes the game day experience better for everyone.

→ Upward Cheer Format

- ◆ All cheers should be encouraging and avoid negative terms like kill or destroy.
- ◆ Teams may cheer for a different team each week.
- ◆ Upward Sports recommends you avoid tumbling and stunting as part of your cheerleading program if you do not have proper equipment and qualified coaches.
- ◆ In most cases, like age groups will be cheering together.

→ Game Day Stars *(*if included in your Team Box)*

If your league is using Game Day Stars, you will have an Award Stars booklet. These multi-colored stickers are given to each cheerleader at the end of every game. Star presentation should be an exciting time. Encourage parents to cheer as stars are distributed to each cheerleader. Make specific points why each participant receives a particular star. Notes you or your assistant coach take during the game should be used during this time as you encourage their efforts.

Encourage participants to display the stars they receive on their posters or megaphones. Here is a list of the game day stars and what they represent.



EFFORT (blue star) means giving your best at all times, regardless of the circumstances. Look for a cheerleader who always gives their maximum effort, no matter what.



LEADERSHIP (red star) is for a cheerleader who helps the squad stay focused and calls cheers well so the rest of the squad knows when to be ready.



SPIRIT (gold star) is someone who does everything with excitement and eagerness. It also means treating others on the squad the way you want to be treated.



CHRISTLIKENESS (white star) is someone who is doing their best to imitate Jesus through your words, actions, and attitudes. Examples include sacrificing for the squad, unselfish, being a leader, and encouraging others.



CHEERS (gray star) is a cheerleader who works well with the rest of the squad on motions, jumps, and correct timing of words.

DISTRIBUTING GAME DAY STARS

Star presentation is a special time for every cheerleader. When distributing these stars, make it fun by:

- ◆ Inviting parents and other spectators to meet at a specific area away from where the game took place.
- ◆ Giving specific reasons why each cheerleader received their star.
- ◆ Applauding each child as they receive their star.

TIP: Find a location off of the court and take your time with this activity after the game.

The Star Distribution Form can be found on MyUpward and in the back of your coach cheerbook. Use this form to track which stars participants receive each week. Avoid giving cheerleaders the same star each week and make an attempt to award each cheerleader all five stars throughout the season.

Note: The green practice star should be awarded to every cheerleader who participates in the weekly practice devotion time.

CHEER COMPETITION

If you're interested in hosting a competition in your league, get together with your league director and discuss the possibilities. To help answer any questions you may have, as well as provide step-by-step instruction in carrying out a first-class cheer competition, visit the Cheer Director page on MyUpward.org.

CHEER SHOWCASE

An Upward Cheer Showcase is a great way to highlight cheerleaders on game day. This is a fun event that takes place on a game day in place of a basketball game. It is a way to celebrate and encourage cheerleaders while showing what they have learned throughout the season. If you are interested in incorporating a Cheer Showcase on one of your game days, review the resources found on MyUpward.

→ The Season Celebration

The Season Celebration event provides another opportunity to celebrate with your cheerleaders and connect with their families. Since your attendance at this event demonstrates your love and support for your cheerleaders, all coaches should attend. Your league director may provide each team with an end-of-season gift to give out at the Season Celebration.

→ Game Day Format

Game Day for Upward Cheerleaders is an exciting time. Cheerleaders have practiced, learned, and are ready to cheer in front of spectators, players, and coaches. Here are some helpful reminders to make game day a great experience and ensure that, as a coach, you are prepared..

- ◆ **Game Preparation:** Use the “Game Day Plan” from the back section of this book to write out a plan for your squad’s game day. There is a form for each individual game day. Use the form to plan out warm-ups and stretches for your squad. List which cheers, chants, or other routines you plan to have the squad perform during the game, between periods, and at halftime. You can also use this form to make notes for game day stars. The key is to have an active squad and to help them have fun so that they can develop mentally, athletically, physically, and socially.
- ◆ **Warm-up:** Instruct cheerleaders to arrive 15 to 20 minutes before their scheduled game time to warm up and stretch before cheering. Use your Game Day Plan form to prepare a warm-up routine and list of stretches. Have an assistant coach along with a cheerleader lead the squad in stretching. After warming up, the cheerleader can select from the list of stretches. Giving cheerleaders leadership roles helps them to feel comfortable leading a group and helps them to develop mentally and socially.
- ◆ **Introductions:** Your league may include player and cheerleader introductions. Check with your cheer director for the protocol of participant introductions. Cheerleaders should go first and can then form a tunnel for players

to run through. Your cheer director may have a form for you to list cheerleader names for introductions before the game. You can rotate the list each week so that a different cheerleader goes first.

- ◆ **Pregame Prayer:** Be sure to include your cheerleaders in the pre-game prayer with all players, coaches, and referees before the start of the game.
- ◆ **During the game:** Make sure that cheerleaders are active throughout the game, and are part of the game day experience. Cheerleaders should perform in an area designated specifically for them while the game is taking place. You can allow a specific cheerleader or a rotation of cheerleaders to call out the next cheer or chant from a list you have prepared ahead of time. It's ok to repeat cheers and chants as your squad develops favorites.
 - **Be alert:** Cheerleaders should be alert to the action taking place on the court to protect themselves from an out of bounds ball or player coming their way.
 - **Be organized:** Encourage cheerleaders to place their poms on the ground as a marker for their position in the lineup. This reminder helps them look uniform on game day.
 - **Be flexible:** Cheerleaders can switch to a different location at halftime if two games are taking place side by side.
- ◆ **Between periods:** This is a great time to have cheerleaders perform during the game. A quick routine of less than one minute is appropriate between periods.

Work with game officials to alert you when there is an end of a quarter.

- ◆ **Halftime:** Halftime allows for a longer dance routine or a couple of cheers or chants. Make sure to consult with your cheer director to know what will take place at halftime. There may be a devotion or interactive activity to engage the fans. Cheerleaders are one of the highlights of halftime activities.
- ◆ **After the game:** At the end of the game, have cheerleaders perform the “We’re So Proud of You” chant before leaving the area. Gather cheerleaders and their families away from the game so that you can hand out Game Day Stars to highlight cheerleaders’ efforts using the Award Star Booklet. Having an assistant coach is helpful as they can take notes and determine which star each cheerleader receives.
 - Take time: After all of the game day activities, make sure to take time to interact with your families. This time after the events are ideal for engaging with one family and recognizing the growth you are seeing in their cheerleader. Try and do this with each family throughout a season.

Let’s Go! Take time during practice to make signs and posters cheerleaders can use on game day.

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GAME DAY 1

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

DURING THE GAME

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

GAME DAY 2

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

GAME DAY 3

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

GAME DAY 4

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

GAME DAY 5

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

GAME DAY 6

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

GAME DAY 7

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

GAME DAY 8

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

GAME DAY

Warm-ups: It's essential to get your body active before the game.

Stretch: Being more flexible helps prevent injuries.

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NOTES FOR GAME DAY STARS

◆ NOTES

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Accept the invitation from your League Director to MyUpward.org and have access to:

- *Team roster*
- *Practice and game schedule*
- *Practice plan and devotion material*
- *Videos for practice*
- *Communication Tools*
- *Game day management*
- *Tutorial videos*

