

'Being Part Of God's Team'



This material is suitable for ages 8+.

Aim:

To give the children the opportunity to join God's Team.

Bible focus:

Hebrews 12:1 (NCV)

You will need:

To decorate the area beforehand with streamers, pictures of sporting teams, trophies, posters of upcoming sporting events to resemble a sports stadium or centre, an enlarged copy of 'Being Part of God's Team' and enough copies for each child to take one home (see attached).

Background:

The week before invite the children and leaders to come dressed in the colours or uniform of their favourite sporting teams and to bring trophies or certificates of their own achievements on a team.

Give the children and leaders an opportunity to share why they got the trophy or certificate and how they felt when it was presented to them. (If your group is large you may have to limit the number of people who share to four or five or break into small groups.)

Bible time:

Each of us loves to get trophies and awards. Sometimes we get them because the team we are on wins a competition. Within a team people can have different attitudes about the way they play on a team or even about the team itself. God has a team too and He wants us to be part of His team and just like people have different attitudes to their sporting teams so too people have different attitudes about God's team.

(Display the enlarged picture of 'Being Part of God's Team' so the children can see. Hand out the A4 copies so each child can follow along with you as you talk to them.)

In a sporting team some people are on the field working as a good team member and having fun, enjoying the game and being part of the team. They are like these children in our picture. (Point out the children who are playing on the field.) On God's team some people are full-on members and that may be some of us here today. As members of God's team we are playing our part, doing as the coach taught us, just like the children who are playing on the field.

Other people might be in the audience. (Point out the children in the grandstand.) They are watching the game but don't play on the team. There are the people who watch God's team too. They need to know a little more before they join God's team and perhaps there are some people like that here today. You've been coming to church for a while and you've heard lots of things about God and His Son Jesus but you still need to know a little bit more before you decide to become part of God's team. That's OK and I'd encourage you to speak with a leader about the questions that you have.

On a sporting team some people are on the bench at the side of the field, they're not part of the team that's actually playing but they may get back into join the team later. Some of God's team are like that too. They could be part of God's team but they aren't quite yet. They possibly will be in the future but they aren't at the moment. They're like this child here in our picture who sitting on the sidelines. (Point out the child on the bench.)

There are some people who used to play on a sports team but don't any more, just like some people aren't on God's team any more. They have stopped listening to God as their coach just like the child in the picture who is sitting in the dressing room. (Point out the child in the dressing rooms.)

Looking at the whole picture you may have an idea of where you are on God's team. I want you to take a moment to think about which of the children in this picture you are most like and I'd like you to colour in that child on your page.

(Allow time for the children to do this. It might also be a good time for you leaders to be sitting with the children and so the children can ask questions easily. It will also give teachers a chance to gauge where the children are at.

Note: It's important for the leaders to realise that the children should be free to complete this activity honestly and not in a way that will please the leader.)

Response time:

Just like there is an instruction manual or rule book for how we can play a game of soccer or netball the right way, God has also given us a rule book so we can live our lives the right way.



Can anyone tell me what this rule book is called? (The Bible.) God won't make us become part of His team. He doesn't force us because He wants us to choose for ourselves. One of the instructions God gives to us is found in Hebrews 12:1. '...So let us run the race that is before us and never give up. We should remove the sin that so easily catches us.' (NCV) (Read this verse to the children. The CEV or New Century Version (International Children's Bible) would be appropriate versions to use.)

When we get distracted it's easy to make mistakes and cost the team the game. When we are part of God's team we can also get distracted and that could mean we slip up and do things wrong. This verse is encouraging us to not get distracted but to stay focussed and remember that we are on God's team.

Today there is the opportunity for you to join God's team. We've talked about the fact that we can be at different stages on God's team and for some of you today is the day you want to move from the grandstand, or come back from the dressing room or stop sitting on the benches at the side and be a full-on member of God's team.

I'm going to pray right now and if you would like to join God's team you can pray with me right now.

Prayer:

Dear Lord

Thank you for giving me the chance to be part of your team (pause), I want to join your team today (pause). Forgive me when I get distracted and forget to be part of your team (pause) and please help me to stay focussed and live as a member of your team (pause). Amen.

Follow up:

Encourage the children that if they have further questions they would like to ask, to come and speak to you or one of the other leaders about this. Also encourage any children who have prayed this prayer for the first time to come and tell you so you can pray for them this week and help them to keep on trusting Jesus.

It will be helpful to have copies of Starting Out: how to be a follower of Jesus for 8 - 11's to help you follow up the children. Part 2 of the Starting Out booklet introduces the child to the Bible and helps them understand what it's like to live as a friend of Jesus. Some age-appropriate Bible Reading notes may also be an appropriate method of following up the children who made decisions. These resources are available from your local Scripture Union Resources For Ministry bookshop. Make time to go through the Bible Reading notes to ensure the children have a good understanding of how to use these notes.



A further counselling resource that may be helpful if a child has more questions is Team Talk, again produced by Scripture Union. It is available through their Resources For Ministry department ph. 02 4337 0200 [www. scriptureunion.org.au/resources_ministry.htm](http://www.scriptureunion.org.au/resources_ministry.htm) or Koorong Books www.koorong.com.au. This resource includes pages for children who are recommitting their lives or for children who have asked questions about a particular issue. E.g. Why did dad leave home?

Linking children in to other sections in the corps e.g. Sunday School, SAGALA, Kids Club or Junior Soldiers will also help with their ongoing spiritual development.





IN THE DRESSING ROOMS

Have been part of the team in the past but not at the moment.

IN THE STANDS

Just watching to see what happens. Would need to know more before joining.

ON THE BENCH

Not playing as part of the team yet.

ON THE FIELD

Part of Jesus' team and part of the action.