

Calvary Chapel  of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BASKETBALL DEVOTIONS

4-9 year olds

Week 4

In Love

In Love

The objective is the goal or main teaching point of this week's study. If you convey one thing to your players, make it this.

Read this passage aloud to the kids, as it will be the focus of this week's study. Each week's memory verse will be in bold.

Here is where we will discuss today's passage with the players. This can be read off the page or summarized and explained in the coach's own words.

Objective This lesson will teach the kids that Christians love God and others self-sacrificially and through our actions.

Scripture Passage:

“By this we know love, because He [Jesus] laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

1 John 3:16-18 (Memory verse, 1 John 3:16, in **bold**)

In the Word

What do you think the most important commandment in the whole Bible is? One day, someone asked Jesus this question, and His answer was to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30-31). In short, He told us to love God and to love other people.

Clearly, love is really important to the Lord, but what does love even mean? Is it just liking something a lot, whether that's basketball, ice cream, your pet dog, or your family? Is it a fuzzy feeling inside your heart that's there one minute and gone the next? The Bible tells us that love is much more than this. If we want to understand what love truly is, 1 John 3:16-18 tells us that we should look at Jesus.

The greatest example of love is when Jesus died for us on the cross. He didn't just say that He loved us, He showed it with His actions. He saw that we were trapped in our sins and needed help, and He did something about it. He gave everything, even His own life, to save us, putting our needs above His own comfort. We didn't deserve His love and we gave Him nothing in return, but He still died for us.

As Christians, we need to follow Christ's example by loving others the way He loved us. That means putting our love into action. Imagine seeing a rich man walk by someone with no food and say, “I love you,” but then walk away without giving anything. Does that sound like love to you? Of course not! 1 John 3:18 tells us that we can't just love with our words.

In the Word (Continued)

We need to show it with our actions. That could include helping those in need, encouraging and spending time with those who are sad or need a friend, and giving to those who have less than us.

Today's memory verse says that just as Jesus gave up His life for us, we should lay down our lives for the brethren (other Christians). Now most of us will never have to give up our lives for someone the way that Jesus did. But are you willing to give up the things you want in order to please and serve others? Do you put other people's needs before your own? This can be really difficult to do. Sometimes you might not feel that the person you're showing love to deserves to be treated this way, and they might never show you love in return. But that's what Jesus did for us. Since He gave His own life up to help you and me, we should show that same love to others.

"On the Court" gives some in-game situations where today's lesson can be applied, while "Off the Court" gives examples from everyday life. Encourage them to do the things you listed during the game today.

On the Court

- No matter what the score is or how you're feeling, make sure that the way you speak to and treat your teammates, opponents, refs, and coaches is with love, kindness, and respect.
- Ask your coach for ways you can help them out. Even little things like cleaning up after the game can make a big difference.
- Encourage and thank the refs this week. It's not something that they hear often.

Off the Court

- Help those who are in need. For example, you could rake leaves or shovel snow for a neighbor, or help a younger brother or sister with their homework.
- Put the needs and wants of others before your own. Instead of trying to please yourself, look for ways to bless others.
- Sometimes parents/guardians and siblings can be the hardest people to love. Think of ways to show love to the people in your family this week.

These are some final notes/goals to accomplish this week. These are not meant to be read, but are instructions for the coach.

The Game Plan

1. Review last week's memory verse, Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Give a ticket to any player who can recite it.
2. Learn and memorize 1 John 3:18 with your team. Encourage them to practice the verse over the week.
3. Challenge your team to show their love for God and others, on and off the court, through their actions. Have them think of ways they can help someone in need.