

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BASKETBALL DEVOTIONS

10-18 year olds

Week 9

Draw Near to God

Draw Near to God

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.

Our lessons for our older age groups are designed to be more discussion-based. This section is for the coach to read ahead of time so that he/she understands the goal of the discussion and is able to direct the conversation.

Objective This lesson will present the Gospel message to the players, showing that they can repent of their sins and turn to Christ for forgiveness.

Scripture Passage:

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

James 4:8

Coaches Guide

This season, we have studied God's wisdom in the book of James in the areas of being quick to listen, being doers of the Word, favoritism, controlling the tongue, humility, patience, and prayer. Obeying God in these ways will keep us from all sorts of problems, but today we are going to address the biggest problem we all face: separation from God.

James 4:8 tells us to draw near to God because we are separated from Him by our sins. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God's Word. All of us have sinned, and because God is perfect and has no sin, we cannot be with Him forever in heaven as sinners. The Bible says the punishment for sin is death, which is eternal separation from God.

The good news is that God didn't want things to remain this way, which is why He sent Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus was born as a human and lived a perfect, sinless death but was executed as a criminal, not for His own sins (He had none) but for ours. He took the punishment that we deserved (death) so that we didn't have to pay it. Then He rose again on the third day, defeating death. Now, we can live with Him forever if we draw near to God.

So how do we draw near to God? The second half of James 4:8 says to cleanse our hands of sin. In other words, we have to repent, which means turning away from our sin and to Jesus. We do this by admitting that we are sinners and asking Him to forgive our sins and be our Lord (Master) and Savior. If we do that, the Bible says we are saved from sin.

Team discussion gives questions to ask your team in order to discuss today's topic. Use the information from the coaches guide to steer the conversation toward the biblical truth.

"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.

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

Team Discussion

1. What have we learned about so far this season in our team devotions? Why is it a good idea to do these things?
2. What is the biggest problem every person faces according to the Bible? What is God's solution?
3. How can we draw near to God and be saved?
4. When did you first "draw near to God"? (This is a great chance to share your testimony of how you became a Christian with the kids).
5. Present the Gospel and offer a chance for the kids to be saved.

On the Court

- Unbelievers play basketball in a way to make themselves feel and look good, but we as believers should make our main goal to honor the Lord on the court.
- Are there ways you are sinning in the way you play basketball? Repent of those sins and draw near to God.

Off the Court

- If you have never asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, draw near to Him and ask Him to forgive your sins.
- Drawing near God is something we can do throughout our lives. Reading the Bible and praying are some of the best ways to do that.
- Tell any friends or family who don't believe in Jesus that they can draw near to God and have their sins forgiven.

The Game Plan

1. Review last week's memory verse, James 5:16 (NIV). Give a ticket to any player who can recite it.
2. Because this is the last week, there is no memory verse for next week.
3. The most important thing we want to do today is present the Gospel and present the kids with a chance to get saved.
4. Share the story of how you got saved with the kids to show them what it means to draw near to God and have Him draw near to you.