

These sample devotions were written for [South City Athletic Club](#) coaches to use with their players during practices. So, the language is directed towards coaches and players. However, that can be modified to fit any setting. The players range in age from 5 to 14 years old so these devotions can be used to fit a broad age group. I hope these sample devotions will be helpful as you work to write your own devotions. Let me know if I can help you in any way. – Jeff Francis (jfrancis@sagu.edu)

BIG IDEA: Jesus is most important!

OPENING QUESTION:

ASK: What's your favorite kind of pizza?

There's all kinds of pizza out there. You can get meat lovers pizza. You can get pizza with pineapple on it. Do you know what anchovies are? They're little fish. Did you know that some people even eat pizza with anchovies on it? Gross! And a lot of people just like plain ole cheese pizza. But some people, they eat pizza with everything on it. And there's a special kind of pizza for those people. Do you know what it's called? It's called a supreme pizza. A supreme pizza has cheese and pepperoni and sausage. It has onions and peppers and mushrooms and black olives. It has EVERYTHING on it! And that's why they call it a supreme pizza.

ASK: Do you know what the word supreme means?

Supreme means bigger and better than anything else. If we're the supreme soccer team, that means we're the best soccer team. Whoever the fastest runner is, that's the supreme runner. If something is supreme, that means it's better than anything else. If someone is supreme, then that means that person is over everyone else.

ASK: Who do you know that is supreme?

Jesus is supreme! That means that compared to anything else Jesus is better. He's more powerful. He's more loving. He's more kind. He made everything. Jesus holds all things together and makes everything work. If you made a list of all the really important people, Jesus is number 1 on the list. And that's the main point I want to tell you today is that...

BIG IDEA: Jesus is most important.

TEXT: "Jesus is first in everything." – Colossians 1:18 (NLT)

There was a leader in the church named Paul. And he wrote a bunch of letters to different churches to help them learn about God. We find those letters in the Bible. And one of the churches he wrote to was in a town named Colossae. And it looks like the Christians there started to forget just how important Jesus was. And so Paul writes a letter to them and says, "Oh no. Don't you dare forget how important Jesus is!" And he tells them that, "Jesus is first in everything." (Colossians 1:18)

APPLICATION:

ASK: Do you believe that Jesus is most important?

ASK: What's one thing we can do to show that Jesus is most important?

Some things might be...

- Think about Jesus during the day.
- Talk to others about Jesus.
- Learn more about Jesus.
- Ask God to help you to live like Jesus.
- Love other people like Jesus would.
- Others???

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together because Jesus is most important and we want to include him in our practices.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for the week is Kenya (Africa).
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that each one of us would make Jesus most important in our lives.

BIG IDEA: God will help me!

OPENING QUESTION:

ASK: What's something that you just can't do alone and you need help with?

- Coach, share a story from a time when someone helped you.

ASK: Do you like asking for help?

Sometimes we like to do things on our own, but it's okay to need help. In fact, we all need help sometimes. When you need help with something, it's better to ask.

ASK: Who are you most likely to ask to help you?

Family and friends are who we normally ask help from. But I also want you to know that you can ask me for help. I'm your soccer coach, but if you need help with something I want you to know that you can talk to me and I'll try to help you even if it has nothing to do with soccer. But, do you know who else is there to help you? God!

BIG IDEA: God will help me.

TEXT: "God is our place of safety. He gives us strength. He is always there to help us in times of trouble." – Psalm 46:1 (NIRV)

The Bible has a 66 smaller books in it, and one of those books is called Psalms. Psalms are often short prayers or even songs about God. It's like if you were to write down your prayers or to write a song about God. There's 150 psalms in the Bible. And in Psalm 46 there's this line that talks about how strong God is and that he's there to help us when we're in trouble. Now that doesn't mean that if we disobey our parents he'll get us out of trouble or if we disobey your coach you won't have to run laps. But what it does mean is that whenever you are going through something, God is there. You can talk to him about it. He wants to help you.

APPLICATION:

ASK: What's something that we might need to ask God's help with?

Some things might be...

- A problem at home.
- A problem at school.
- To forgive us of our sin.
- To help us not to sin.
- To help us to be kind and loving to others even when they aren't kind to us.

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together because God will help us when we ask him to.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about? What's something you need God's help with?
- Our prayer country for this week is Liberia (Africa).
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that God would help you.

BIG IDEA: God loves me!

OPENING QUESTION:

ASK: What's something you really love? (Encourage discussion. It could be a food, thing, place, person, etc.)

- Coach shares something that they really love.

We all know that the most important thing we can love is people. We should love our parents, siblings, friends, teachers and especially our coaches. 😊 But of course, we should really love everyone. And that includes people different from us. It also includes people that may be mean to us.

ASK: Sometimes it's hard to love some people isn't it?

But, do you know how we can love others? It's because God loved us first. Sometimes our love changes. We love a certain food but then we get sick after eating it one day and we don't love it anymore. We think we love some boyfriend or girlfriend but then we lose interest and don't love them anymore. But God's love never ends. His love never changes. His love is perfect. And God loves you.

BIG IDEA: God loves me.

TEXT: "God is love." – 1 John 4:8 (NIV)

The Bible has a verse in it that says, "God is love." That's what he is. That's who he is. He is love. And he loves you VERY much. But it's easy to say that we love someone isn't it? Sometimes it's harder to show it.

ASK: How did God show that he loves us?

God shows his love in many ways, but the main way that God shows that he loves us is because he sent Jesus. God sent his son to earth to show us what he's like. And Jesus was loving. Even though he knew that Jesus would end up being killed on a cross, God sent him anyway. God sent Jesus to show us how much he loves us.

APPLICATION:

ASK: Are there ever times when you wonder if anyone loves you? Or if God loves you?

ASK: What can we do to remind ourselves of how much God loves us?

Some things might be...

- Thinking about Jesus and what he went through for us.
- Talking to a Christian friend when we are going through a difficult time so they can help us.

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together because God loves us so much that he wants us to talk with him.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for this week is Malaysia (in Asia).
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that we'll remember how much God loves us.

BIG IDEA: God loves everyone!

OPENING QUESTION:

ASK: Do you guys remember what we talked about last week?

Last week we talked about how “God loves me” or “God loves you.” And that’s really important to remember. A lot of people struggle to believe that God really does love them and he absolutely does! But sometimes we remember that God loves us, but we forget that God loves everybody else too! And that’s what our big idea is this week...

BIG IDEA: God loves everyone.

ASK: Now, I don’t want you to name any names here. But, can you describe the kind of person that is hard for you to love? (Allow for feedback.)

Sometimes it’s hard to love people that are...

- Mean to us or to others
- Look or talk different than us
- Have more money or less money
- Believe or think different than we do
- On the other team we are playing, especially if they aren’t playing fair or are playing dirty.

TEXT: “Friends, let us love one another for love comes from God.” – 1 John 4:7 (NIV)

Here’s what the Bible teaches. We should love one another because love comes from God. And that doesn’t just mean that we should love our friends or our family. It means we should love everyone. Even those that we don’t think deserve it. Even those that it is really hard to love. Why? Because love comes from God. He will help us to love.

APPLICATION:

ASK: Can you think of someone in your life that is sort of hard to love? What can you do to show kindness to them?

ASK: What are we supposed to do when someone is mean to us at school or on the soccer field?

Some things might be...

- Think about how much Jesus loves us even when we don’t deserve it.
- Catch our breath and don’t let our emotions get out of control and cause us to do or say something we shouldn’t.
- Talk to a friend, parent, teacher, coach or other trusted adult.

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together because loving other people that are different from us can be really hard and we need God’s help.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for this week is Mexico.
- Let’s pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let’s pray that God will help us to love others and control our emotions.

BIG IDEA: I need Christian friends!

OPENING QUESTION:

ASK: Who's your best friend?

We all need friends. Everyone wants to be liked. Everyone wants to be accepted. Sometimes people make some really bad choices because they are looking for friends. Lots of people get involved with drugs or alcohol because they do those things with other people that they feel accept them. It's really important that we find the right kind of friends. It's also really important that we be the right kind of friend.

ASK: What kind of things do you look for in a best friend?

Those are all good things. Now, all of our friends don't need to be Christian friends. It's good to be a friend and accept all people no matter what they believe. But we do need Christian friends. If none of your close friends love Jesus, then it's going to be really hard for you to love Jesus. That's because we need the support and encouragement of others. That's what our big idea is today...

BIG IDEA: I need Christian friends.

TEXT: "Encourage one another and build each other up." – 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

The Bible talks a WHOLE lot about the way we should treat other people. One of the guys that wrote part of the Bible was a guy named Paul. And he was writing to a group of Christians and said, "Encourage one another and build each other up." The Bible says we should be helping one another. The only way to do that is to have Christian people in your life to encourage you and that you can encourage.

APPLICATION:

ASK: What are ways that we can develop Christian friendships?

Some things might be...

- Go to church and get involved
- Go to youth group at church and get involved
- Go to the campus Bible club at your school
- Talk about your faith to your friends. When you talk about Jesus, you will find other people that follow him too.

ASK: How can we encourage or build someone else up?

- Say kind things.
- Look out for friends that are struggling and let them know that God can help them.
- Pray for a friend.

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray for our friends and I'm going to pray that God will bring good Christian friends in your life.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for this week is Morocco (in Africa).
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that God will help each one of us to have a good Christian friend we can depend on.

BIG IDEA: God wants me to be honest!

OPENING QUESTION:

ASK: How many lies do you think the average person tells in a year?

Did you know that studies show that the people that are most likely to tell a lie are kids and teenagers? The average kid tells 912 lies in a year!

ASK: If you were going to be totally honest, how many of you sometimes tell a lie?

ASK: Why do you think people tell lies?

People lie for all sorts of reasons. Maybe it's to keep from getting into trouble. Maybe it's to keep from being embarrassed. Some people don't tell the truth because they are afraid others won't like them if they are totally honest. But, here's the main point I want us to talk about today.

BIG IDEA: God wants me to be honest.

TEXT: "...they acted with complete honesty." – 2 Kings 12:15 (NIV)

There's this interesting story in the Bible. God's people would worship in this one special place called the temple. It was sort of like a church building they would come to. But the temple was broken and falling apart and the king wanted to get it repaired so everyone donated a bunch of money to fix it. And they got people who were experts in building and fixing things to fix the temple and they gave them all the money to use for whatever they needed. It was a LOT of money! The Bible says the reason they trusted them with all that money is because "they acted with completed honesty." They were just regular guys who knew how to fix and build things, but they also had something else. They had character. They could be trusted. They were honest. It's important to God that we are honest.

ASK: Why do you think it is important to tell the truth? I mean...aren't some lies not that big of a deal?

There's lots of reasons why we should be honest and always tell the truth. God definitely doesn't want us to tell lies, but it's also about the other people around us. God loves them and doesn't want them to be tricked or lied to. When we tell the truth, it's a way of showing love and kindness to other people. Being an honest person is the kind of person that God wants us to be. God wants me and you to be honest.

APPLICATION:

ASK: What's something you can do when you are tempted to tell a lie?

ASK: What should you do if you do tell a lie? What happens if you mess up...what can you do then?

You could go to that person and admit what you did and ask for forgiveness. That's hard isn't it? It's a whole lot easier to just be honest from the beginning. You can also ask God for forgiveness.

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together because sometimes being honest is hard and we want God to help us.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for this week is the Netherlands.
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that God will help us to become more honest.

BIG IDEA: God forgives me!

OPENING QUESTION:

ASK: What's the biggest mistake you've ever made? Did you ever mess up really bad?

- Coach shares a time when he/she made a big mistake.

ASK: What can you do when you make a big mistake? If you mess up, what are some things you can do?

You can try to learn from your mistake and not do it again. You can try to work hard to make up for it. But something else you can do is ask for forgiveness. If you hurt somebody either on accident or even on purpose, you can ask them to forgive you.

ASK: What is it called when we make a mistake against God? What's it called when God wants us to do one thing but we disobey and do our own thing and do what we want?

When we disobey, that's called sin. And here's the thing. We all sin. But when you sin, I want you to know that God will forgive you. That's our big idea for today...

BIG IDEA: God forgives me.

TEXT: "Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." – Luke 23:34 (NIV)

Jesus is the greatest example of someone who forgives. Jesus taught and healed people, but some people didn't like it, and they crucified him. Crucified means that they killed him on a cross. He hung there until he died. But while he was on the cross, before he died, Jesus looked out at those around him who were killing him and prayed to his Father in heaven and said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." While people were killing Jesus, he prayed for them that God would forgive them. Jesus forgave those that were hurting him, and when we sin, Jesus will forgive us too.

APPLICATION:

ASK: Can you name some examples of the sins that we do sometimes?

- Coach helps players name some common sins.

ASK: What are you going to do the next time you sin?

- Ask God to forgive and know that he will!
- If you hurt someone else, you can ask them to forgive you.
- You can ask God to help you not do that sin anymore.

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together because we need God's forgiveness and we need his help to not sin.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for this week is Nigeria (Africa).
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned, and let's pray that God would forgive us when we sin and help us not to sin.

BIG IDEA: Because God forgives me, I need to forgive others!

OPENING QUESTION:

One of the worst things that can happen to us is when someone hurts us. When someone is mean on purpose. It could be when someone says something mean that hurts our feelings or when someone bullies us. It's a terrible feeling.

ASK: When someone hurts you, what's your normal first reaction?

ASK: When we sin against God, what does he do? (When we ask him, he forgives us.)

ASK: So, what do you think we should do when someone hurts us?

We should forgive them. And that is our big idea today...

BIG IDEA: Because God forgives me, I need to forgive others.

- Coach tells a story about a time he/she had to forgive someone.

TEXT: "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." – Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

Paul wrote a letter in the Bible to a church. And he says that because their life has been changed by Jesus they should stop doing bad things and start doing good things. And one of the good things he says they should do is to forgive. But what he says is, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." You know how much God has forgiven you and me? A WHOLE LOT! That's the same kind of forgiveness that we should give to others. And do you know why we can forgive others? It's because God has already forgiven us.

APPLICATION:

ASK: Can you think of someone that you should forgive? Is there anyone that you just don't really like all that much because maybe they were mean to you or someone else you care about?

ASK: How do you forgive this person? What do you need to do in order to forgive someone?

- Remember how much God has forgiven you.
- Make a decision to forgive. When bad feelings come back up, choose to forgive again. It might take time.
- Ask God to help you forgive.
- If you are hurting and have a hard time forgiving, talk to someone you can trust about what happened.

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together because sometimes forgiving is hard.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for this week is Pakistan.
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that God would help us to forgive.

BIG IDEA: God listens when I pray!

OPENING QUESTION:

ASK: If you could meet and talk to any famous person, who would you want to meet and talk to?

- Coach either shares most famous person they have met or the famous person they would like to meet.

If you met your hero, if you talked to the most famous person in the world, the best soccer player in the world, the president of the United States or whoever you can think of that would be cool to meet and talk to, did you know that it would not compare with the best, most powerful person ever? And did you know that you can talk to that most powerful person any time you want? Do you know who I'm talking about? That's right. I'm talking about God.

ASK: What do we call it when we talk to God?

Yes, we call it praying. And here's the thing. It's not just that you can talk to God, but when you talk to God, he listens! And that's our main point today...

BIG IDEA: God listens when I pray.

TEXT: "God has surely listened and has heard my prayer." – Psalm 66:19 (NIV)

There's a big book in the Bible that is full of prayers and songs to God. It's called Psalms. And each psalm is sort of like a poem that talks about God and talks to God. In the 66th Psalm, the person writing it talks about all the great things God has done and one of those great things that God does is that he listens to us when we pray. The person that wrote this song said, "God has listened to me and he has heard my prayer!"

It's pretty cool to think that God...the one that created this whole world, the one that has all power...God listens to you and listens to me when we talk to him. Wow! That's really awesome.

APPLICATION:

ASK: So, if God listens when we pray, what do you think we ought to do?

Yup. We ought to pray.

ASK: But, what does that look like? What should be our goal? How often do you want to pray?

- What if we set it as a goal to pray every night before bed for the next week? Could we do that?

ASK: Did you know that even if you don't know what to say, God will still listen? We'll talk more another time about what you can pray about, but I just want you to know today that God listens no matter what.

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together. Why? Because God listens when we pray.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for this week is the Philippines.
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that God would help us remember to pray!
- Perhaps give a player a chance to lead in prayer.

BIG IDEA: The purpose of my life is to know God!

OPENING QUESTION:

- Why do you guys have to go to school? (Because school and education are important.)
- Why do you have to take a shower and brush your teeth? (Because not smelling bad and not having stinky breath is important.)
- Why do we have South City Athletic Club? Do you know why we have this soccer team?

You might think it is to win soccer games. And we do want to win. But did you know that South City is a Christian club? South City is here so that we can REACH, TRAIN and SEND you guys out to make a difference in our world. Soccer can make a difference in someone's life, but nothing makes a difference like Jesus. We have this club...this team's purpose is to help you love Jesus more, and because you love Jesus, we want to help you to make a positive impact in your family, school, community and even around the world.

ASK: If our team's purpose is to help you guys know about God, then what should we be doing each week? (That's right. We should be teaching you about God! That's why we have short devotions every week.)

ASK: We talked about our soccer club's purpose. But, did you know that your life has a purpose? And my life has a purpose. Why are we here on this planet? What is our purpose?

Here's our big idea for today...

BIG IDEA: The purpose of my life is to know God.

TEXT: "I want to know Christ!" – Philippians 3:10

A guy named Paul wrote some of the Bible. And in one place Paul was writing about the things that were really important to him. He was talking about the stuff that really mattered. And here's what he said right in the middle of it all. Paul said, "I want to know Christ!" Do you guys want to know Christ too?

It's really important that you and I remember the reason we are here. We are here to know God, and the way that we know God is by knowing Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION:

ASK: So, how can we know God?

Some ways to know Christ are to...

- Talking to God (prayer)
- Learning about God (church and the Bible)
- Thinking about God (on our own)
- Talking about God (with friends and family)

ASK: What's one thing you are going to do this week to know God better?

PRAYER:

We are going to take a minute to pray together because praying to God helps us to know him better.

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country/area for the week is Puerto Rico.
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that each one of us would know God better.

TEMPLATE:

BIG IDEA:

OPENING QUESTION:

ENGAGE!

ASK:

BIG IDEA:

FOCUS!

TEXT:

BIBLE!

APPLICATION:

APPLY!

ASK:

Some things might be...

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PRAYER:

PRAY!

We are going to take a minute to pray together because...

- Do you have anything you would like for us to pray about?
- Our prayer country for this week is...
- Let's pray for these things you guys have mentioned and let's pray that...