



# Soccer Devotional Season 1

*Integrating sports, life, and truth*

Sport(s): Soccer

Ages: 6-14

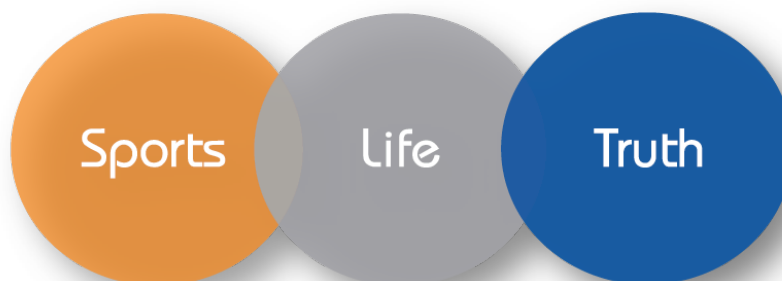
## Overall Application:

These devotionals outline a soccer drill to be used during practice. The coach will ask age-appropriate leading questions to engage the players in a life-topic. The goal in each week is to tie in a Biblical truth pertaining to the topic discussed during practice.

## How to use 3D Devotionals:

In our efforts to bring Christianity and Sports together, historically, Christians established a devotional time during practice breaks or half times of games. Oftentimes, the stories or passages used during these times didn't have much to do with the sports, and, even if they did, tended to feel like the biblical truths were being **injected** into the sports realm. Unfortunately, these efforts often led players and coaches to disconnect sports from biblical truth and build a “compartmentalized view” of life.

3D Devotionals come from a passion to live all of life for God's glory and, therefore, an approach to **integrate** sports and biblical truth. We designed 3D Devotionals to be used in the flow of practice, utilizing the drills and skills emphasized in each particular practice setting. Ultimately, the goal of 3D Devotionals is not to just learn truth but for coaches, players and parents to learn a new way of thinking that integrates **SPORTS – LIFE – TRUTH** and can be used far beyond their time in sports.



## Week 1 - "GETTING ACQUAINTED"

*Purpose – Get to know your players, showing them interest and concern.*

### ***Soccer/Icebreaker:***

At the beginning of practice – play The Name Game.

- 1) Have each player give his/her name and tell you the athlete they would most like to be and why.
- 2) You, the coach, now try to go around and name each of the players and the athlete he wants to be like – this may be challenging.
- 3) Have each player go around and try to name all the players with the hero's name.

### ***During a water break, find out from your players:***

- Where they go to school
- Whether they have brothers and sisters
- What they like to do in their free time

Tell them a snippet of your story – you will do more of this through the season. This would include:

- Where you grew up
- Where you went to school
- Whether you have brothers and sisters
- What you liked to do in your free time when you were their age

*\*As you can see, the first week is very much an introductory week. The goal for week 1 is just to get to know your players and have them become comfortable with you as well as become comfortable sitting down and doing a devotional time.*

## Week 2 – “SERVE OTHERS!”

*Purpose – To see the importance of giving away what we value (serving).*

### **Soccer Skill:** Passing

*Drills you could use – Stationary passing between 2 players; passing in a circle of all players with a player in the middle trying to steal the ball; passing while advancing down the field between two players.*

*Comments during drills - (Make age appropriate.)*

- When you are dribbling down the field, we all want to keep the ball. Why?
- We want to score. Why? It is fun.
- But if we keep the ball to ourselves, eventually the other team will figure it out and swarm around us and keep us from scoring.
- The way to stop that from happening is to learn to pass.
- When we pass, we give the possibility of our joy to score to another person. We share the ball and give them our joy.
- When we do that, we make their joy our joy.

**Life Principle:** – Greater joy comes from sharing rather than keeping for ourselves.

*Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)*

- Sharing is a part of all of our lives. You practice this at home with your brothers and sisters when you share your (fill in blank or ask them – could be candy or Wii or some game)
- If you keep it all for yourself, then you don't let them have any joy. This is called selfishness.
- Just like in soccer, if we do this in life, we eventually lose our joy.

**Biblical Truth:** – Sharing with others is serving – by making their joy our joy.

*Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)*

- God calls this kind of sharing serving – when we want to share ourselves with someone else so they get happy/joyful.

- The greatest person who ever lived, Jesus Christ, said this about himself. “The Son of Man didn’t come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45
- Jesus didn’t live his life to keep what he had, to keep dribbling the ball so he could score. He passed the ball, shared what he had--his life-- so we could experience the greatest joy – that of having a relationship with Him and all it promises.
- With Jesus as our example, let’s keep practicing passing and remember what this opportunity presents – a chance to keep for ourselves or share the joy with others.

## Week 3 - “SERVING IN CONFIDENCE”

*Purpose: – To have confidence that I will be taken care of as I serve others.*

**Soccer Skill:** - Advancing the Ball by Passing (rather than dribbling)

Activity 1: Passing mechanics

In pairs pass the ball through a marked out gate using the inside of your foot to control (receive) and to pass the ball.

Various commands given by coach.

Coaching points of pass:

1. Use the inside of your foot
2. Standing foot next to the ball
3. Strike the middle of the ball
4. Following through
5. Shoulders square (point to your target)
6. Tempo/speed of play

*Drills you could use – All Touch Game*

Form two teams to play a mini soccer game with the following parameter:

- Every player on the field has to touch the ball (pass and receive) before a goal can be scored. If any player is left out in touching the ball, the goal does not count.

- Encourage players to pass the ball to their teammates.
- Help players look for teammates who haven't touched the ball.

*Comments* - (Make age appropriate.)

- There are two ways to move the ball down the field. What are they?  
Dribbling, passing.
- Which one is faster? (Passing if good passing, Dribbling if poor passing, but good dribbling)
- We want to learn to pass effectively to advance the ball down the field quickly. For this quick advancement, we need to be willing to give up the ball and serve our teammates by passing the ball to them.

**Life Principle:** - We need to trust that we will be taken care of as we serve others.

*Comments* - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- One of the biggest obstacles to serving others is the fear that no one will take care of me. We see this on the soccer field – players either think their teammates will not pass the ball to them, so when they get the ball they keep it to themselves.
- The question we ask is “If I give up the ball and pass it to my teammate, who will make sure they pass it to me?”
- The answer is that the coach will make sure that they pass it back to you and to other players. You have to trust that your coach will make sure that the player will pass the ball.
- When you believe that your coach will make sure that your teammates will pass the ball to you, then you will pass to them.
- We do the same thing in life. We don't trust that other people will look out for us and we become selfish/self centered and do not serve others. Can you think of an example where you acted selfish or didn't serve others?
  - Getting upset because you didn't get what you wanted.
  - Not sharing your toys with your siblings.
  - Pushing someone out of the way so you could be first in line.

- Just like the coach will look out for us on the soccer field, there are other people who will also take care of us as we serve others. Can you name them?

(God, parents, teachers, friends, etc.)

**Biblical Truth:** – God has given us many people that will take care of us and the promise that he himself will take care of us.

*Comments* - (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- This truth – that God will take care of us – is mentioned in the Scriptures in Isaiah 41:13.
- It says: “For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.”
- This is a promise from God that he will take care of us and help us.
- We don’t need to be afraid that no one will take care of us, because God promises that he will.
- We need to trust that God will take care of us as we serve others.
- So let’s remember this as we think about passing the ball to the other players and as we live our lives.

You can serve others because you can trust that God and others will take care of you. This is a promise from God.

## Week 4 - “JUST ASK”

*Purpose* – To recognize the proper position for receiving – a soccer pass and in life.

**Soccer Skill** - Receiving a pass

*Drills you can use* – In pairs, pass the ball through a marked out gate using the inside of your foot to control (receive) and to pass the ball.

Coaching points for receiver:

1. On your toes – Preparation
2. Cushion the ball absorbing its speed
3. Keep the ball moving

4. Guide ball to either side of your body to create an angle for your return pass

*Comments* – (Make age appropriate.)

- We have been talking about making a pass and what is involved in that. Now we want to talk about the other end of the pass – receiving a pass from a teammate.
- Just as there are good mechanics in passing there are good mechanics in receiving a pass. Today we are going to work on the proper position to receive.
- The position I want you to take is what I call an “ready position” – where you are slightly crouched and your weight is on the balls of your feet/ toes.
- You are not standing straight.
- Your weight is not on your heels
- Now everyone get in that “ready position”
- Let’s pass and work on being in this proper position, this “ready position” to receive.

**Life Principle:** - We need the “ready position” of asking for what we need.

*Comments* during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- In life we need this “ready position” to receive from others as well. We need the proper position to be shared with, to be served.
- To think about that proper position in life, I want you to think for a moment about soccer and your teammates. If you are the one passing to them, what attitudes do you not like to see them have? (1. “PASS ME THE BALL” yelling all the time, a demanding to be shared with 2. “You better pass me the ball. I am the star. I am better than you. I deserve for you to pass me the ball” - expectant, sense of entitlement.)
- In life these two attitudes are the improper position, the opposite of the “ready position” to receive from others. When we have these it diminishes the desire of others to share with us.
- What is the ready position in life? It is to ask, humbly, openly.
- What would that look like in soccer? (“Hey, pass it to me, I am open!” Note the difference in tone from demanding and heart from expectant)



- What would it look like in life? (“Hey, sis, could I have a turn on the Wii?”  
Hey brother, could I have some of that popcorn?”)
- Do you think that “ready position is hard or easy in life? (Hard – they could say no)

**Biblical Truth:** – God wants us to have this “ready position” with him as our Father.

*Comments* – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Now this “ready position” for people to share with us, to give us what we want, applies also to God.
- He wants us to come to him with this humble asking – not demanding or expecting from him, just ask openly.
- Jesus talked about this when he said to his followers in Matthew 7:7,8. He told those followers “Ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”
- To emphasize how God responds to this “ready position”, he goes on to tell them this example – “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”
- What does Jesus says God the Father will do to those who come to him in this “ready position”? (Give them what they ask.)
- This is his heart – to be generous in answering our requests so we don’t need to demand from him. Just ask, humbly.

## Week 5 - “SOFT FEET, SOFT HEARTS”

*Purpose:* – To understand the importance of “cushioning” when receiving.

**Soccer Skill** – To have the receiving foot be “soft” when receiving a pass.

*Demonstration* –

- Have them all stand before you in the ready position

- Slightly lift their receiving foot off the ground
- Let that foot swing free, loose
- Have someone pass you the ball, show them how to let their foot be soft absorb the ball, keep it close – like it hit a sponge or a pillow
- Show them how you don't want them to receive – with a “hard” foot – where the ball bounces away like it hit a wall

*Drill* - In pairs pass the ball through a marked out gate using the inside of your foot to control

Coaching points for receiver:

1. On your toes – Preparation
2. Cushion the ball absorbing it's speed
3. Keep the ball moving
4. Guide ball to either side of your body to create an angle for your return pass

*Comments*

- Ready position
- Lift your receiving foot off the ground
- Relax the lower part of your leg
- Imagine a soft foot to take in the ball – to keep it close

**Life Principle:** We need to take in the ways people serve or share with us.

*Comments* during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- When we think about a soft foot for receiving a pass, I want you to think about a soft heart when someone shares with you or serves you in life.
- You remember we talked about the two wrong attitudes for receiving – demanding (PASS THE BALL) or expectant (I deserve for you to pass me the ball.)
- In life, this hard heart attitude would be like a hard foot when receiving a pass – what someone shared would just bounce off our hearts.

- Someone with a hard heart would say things to themselves like “of course they should share;” “After all, look what I did for them.”
- What would a soft heart look like? (Every time someone shared or served, they would genuinely be thankful-- grateful, knowing they didn't deserve what they were getting.
- You might imagine how this would look on the soccer field – (every time a player received a pass they would say under their breath, “Thanks” and move on with the game).

**Biblical Truth:** - God wants us to have soft hearts that respond with gratitude.

*Comments* during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Who would you rather play with – players with soft or hard hearts?
- Who would you rather share with or serve – friends with soft or hard hearts?
- God knows this and this is why he tells us to be thankful. In Ephesians 5:20 it says “always give thanks to God the Father for everything.”
- Who does it say to give thanks to? (God our Father – remind them of the previous lesson about asking God humbly as our Father in heaven)
- What are we to be thankful for? (everything – every time God shares with us, gives us what we ask for)
- Can you give me some things God has shared with you recently or requests he has answered that you can be thankful for?
- How about giving you things like ... (your life, parents, friends, clothes food, this team, etc)
- I want you to go out and when you are receiving a pass, practice saying “thanks” under your breath. Practice this soft heart so that you are on the lookout in life for the things to be thankful for and you avoid this demanding or expectant hard heart.

## Week 6 – “MOVE”

*Purpose:* For players to understand the importance of movement and how it pertains to their growth as a player, person, and child of God.

## **Soccer Skill** - Movement

*Drill* – After you pass the ball to your partner move around the cone, then return to your original position to receive the ball once more.

*Comments* during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- Complete the passing technique before moving, however do not stand and admire
- Communication – teamwork, help your partner
- Speed of movement (fast and slow)
- Tempo and preparation

*Conclusion* – Good passing teams are full of players who can space the field and work to get open. This kind of movement lends itself well to keeping possession of the ball and creating scoring chances.

**Life Principle** – Don't be too easily satisfied (or don't be satisfied by the status quo).

*Comments* during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- In life, it's easy to be lazy. In other words, it's comfortable to live on past accomplishments and not strive to be better (this is similar to making a great pass in soccer and staring in amazement at what you've done instead of continuing to move). It's easy to stay the same. Improving your life can be hard work! Don't let hard work keep you from your potential.
- A great example of this truth is shown in school. Most adults will tell you that they regret not trying harder in school. For example, they will admit settling for a 'B' when could have worked harder and achieved an 'A.' Maybe you've experienced that too?

**Biblical Truth** - Following Christ requires an active, moving, and vibrant faith.

*Comments* during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- James 2:17 says, "...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." It's not enough for us to rest in our faith alone. In other words, it's not enough to be comfortable in receiving Christ as your Savior. God desires for us to grow and to mature. He wants us to move! Through this movement, we grow in our knowledge and faith of Him.

## Week 7 - “MOVE PURPOSEFULLY”

*Purpose:* – For players to understand the importance of movement and how it pertains to their growth as a player, person, and child of God.

### **Soccer Skill** – Movement

#### *Drill you could use*

After you pass the ball to your partner, move around the cone, then return to your original position to receive the ball once more.

*Comments* – (Make age appropriate.)

- Complete the passing technique before moving, however do not stand and admire
- Communication – teamwork, help your partner
- Speed of movement (fast and slow)
- Tempo and preparation

*Conclusion* – Last week we talked about how good passing teams are full of players who can space the field and work to get open. Obviously, movement is a very important part of this spacing but this week we want to clarify what this movement is. It’s not just any movement but rather purposeful movement.

**Life Principle** – Don’t be too easily satisfied (or don’t be satisfied by the status quo).

*Comments* during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- Last week we discussed how easy it is to be lazy. Can anyone remember the example of laziness we discussed in school? We talked about how it can be easy to settle for a ‘B’ when an ‘A’ is possible with hard work. Working to get an ‘A’ is not just an example of hard work but of purposeful movement. What do I mean when I say purposeful movement? In soccer, movement is more than not staying in one place. Rather, it’s about looking to see where you are at, where the defenders are at, where there is open space, where the goal is at, etc. Moving to find an open space, moving to get open for your teammate, and moving around the defenders are examples of purposeful movement. Purposeful movement in soccer then becomes more than just our body moving but rather our body moving in conjunction with vision and purpose.

- Can you think of other examples in life of purposeful movement?  
Examples where you don't just do something but you do something with intent? Examples at school or at home?

**Biblical Truth** – Following Christ requires an active faith but also one with vision

*Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)*

- Last week we discussed James 2:17 which says, "...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." With that verse in mind, I want to introduce a new verse this week.
- Colossians 3:1-2 says, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." What do you think Paul means when he says "set your heart and mind on things above?" I think this is a good example of purposeful movement with our faith. If we set our hearts and minds on Christ this will help us to have a godly vision for our actions (James 2:17).
- So, if we are to set our hearts and minds on Christ to get vision and we know we are to act on this vision because otherwise our faith is dead, then what does this "purposeful movement" look like in our faith? What can we do to make sure our faith isn't dead? (Examples could be reading Scripture, praying, being generous, serving others, etc.)