



Soccer Devotional Season 3

Integrating sports, life, and truth

Sport(s): Soccer

Ages: 6-14



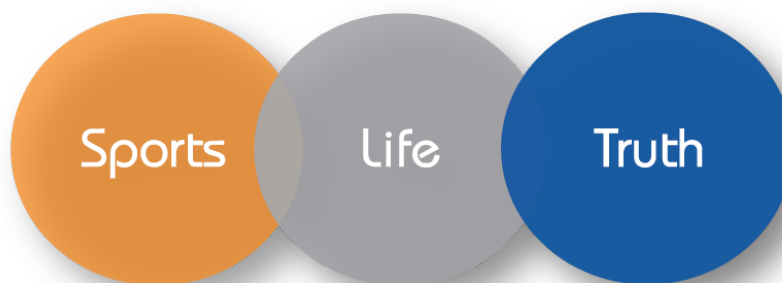
Overall Application:

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 to 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 – “EYES UP!”

Purpose – To recognize the need to look to the future while being aware of the present.

Soccer Skill: Dribbling

Drills you could use – Dribbling in straight lines (within cones), dribbling around cones, dribbling as fast as possible

Comments - (Make age appropriate.)

- The reason we practice dribbling is to move the ball while keeping some control of it ourselves.
- You need to keep in mind two separate ideas – where the ball is and where you are going – either by continuing to dribble or by passing.
- You need to be aware of the ball – with your feet and by glancing down regularly.
- You need to be aware of the field in front of you – by glancing up and looking ahead.
- The tendency among most players is to keep your head down and stay focused on the ball. What is wrong with that idea? (Not sure what is ahead of you and could lose the ball or miss an opportunity to pass or shoot)
- From time to time you will hear me say “Eyes up” – when you do take a glance ahead.
- While you are doing these drills, try to do the same – every 3-5 seconds look up and then back down. (You could call out “Eyes up” during the dribbling drills at a consistent interval to teach them this timing.)

Life Principle: We need to learn to think about both the present and the future together.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Being aware of where the ball is and what is ahead of you is something you need to do on the soccer field. You also need to do it in life.
- In life, you need to be aware of the present but also have a view for the future.



- I will give you an example. What do you want to be when you grow up? (Go around and have each player answer.)
- To become that, it takes more than just focusing on that future. In every case, there is preparation that needs to happen for you to be able to do what you want to do later in life. So you have to focus now on that preparation in order get to that end goal.
- However, you don't just focus on the now. Think about school and let's say it gets hard as you work toward that future. If you only focus on the now, you may decide to quit. The result is just like on the soccer field. If you only focus on the ball, you will miss opportunities. If you get weighed down in the present and overwhelmed and quit, you will miss the opportunity that would be ahead of you.
- Both are important – a view of the future and a grasp of the present. We need to think about both – in soccer and in life.
- Think for a moment about yourself – which of these do you tend to think about more – the present or the future? You need to think about them both like you need to look up and down as you dribble.

Biblical Truth: – God will show us how to keep the future in mind while thinking about the present.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- In the Bible, Solomon spoke about these two ideas in Proverbs 16:9 when he said, “The mind of the man plans his ways, but the Lord directs his steps.”
- First of all, Solomon says we think about the future and then make our present plans – we keep both the present and future in mind.
- Then Solomon gives us a promise – that God actually goes about directing our steps. He is with us in the present showing us exactly what to do in this – keep the present in mind while keeping an eye to the future.
- So as you dribble, as you live, we need to think about both the present and the future, trusting God to show us how.

Week 3 - "SOLID FOUNDATION"



Purpose – To show the need for a good foundation.

Soccer Skill – Simple Throw In

Instruction

- Stand facing the field with feet apart
- Place one hand on each side of the ball
- Take the ball behind the head and throw forward onto the field
- Both feet must stay on the ground
- Stand behind the side line
- Ball must go behind head
- Must use both hands equally (can't use only one hand & if there is a lot of side spin the referee may say one hand was used too much)
- Beginners should throw toward the other team's goal (the goal the opposing goalie is in)

Comments

- Don't step when you throw
- Keep both feet stationary – don't pick up one foot as you throw (show tendency)

Life Principle: - We need a firm foundation for life.

Comments during drills – (Make age appropriate.)

- How many of you have you ever built a sand castle?
- What happens when the tide comes in and the waves wash over it?
- Why does the water do that? (Because the sand doesn't hold together.)
- I want you to think about building that castle. Imagine kneeling on the beach, digging out buckets of sand.
- Living your life is like building that castle. What you build it upon matters. Just like the sand castle.

Biblical Truth: – If we listen to Jesus and obey him, our lives have a firm foundation.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Jesus told a story about two men who both built houses. One built his house on the rock. The other built his house on sand.
- Next storms come with great winds and rain.
- Which house do you think stood up under the storm – the one on the rock or the one on sand?

- Why? (The one on rock had a firm foundation.)
- Jesus said the one who built on the rock was wise and the one on sand foolish.
- Then he said those who listened to him and put into practice what he said are like that wise builder. Their lives stand up under the storms of life.
- I want you to remember that just like your throw in needs a good foundation, so does your life.
- When you listen and obey Jesus your life has this good firm solid foundation.
- When you don't listen and don't obey, your life is like the house on the sand; it will crumble when things get really tough.

Week 4 – “THE GOAL”

Purpose – To understand the importance of knowing what you want to accomplish.

Soccer Skill: Shooting

Drills you could use – 1) Unopposed Shooting 2) Opposed Shooting 3) Shooting Game: improve shooting under pressure and in game situations 4) Small Side Scrimmage

Comments - (Make age appropriate.)

- If possible, look up to see the position of the goalkeeper, choosing a side to shoot the ball – know your target/“goal.”
- Plant your “off” or support foot beside or slightly ahead of the ball, which helps to keep the shot low and point the toe of that foot in the direction you want the ball to go.
- Keep your eyes on the ball.
- Lock the ankle of your kicking foot and kick with your instep/laces.
- Follow through with your kicking leg – allowing your weight to go forward.

Life Principle: We need to pick where we want to go – the “goal” - in the activities of life.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- What do you think is important for being a good goal scorer? (Walk them through this process - there are skills but most importantly picking a “target/goal” and committing to that “target/goal.”)
- What do you think are the causes for someone missing a shot? (Walk them through this – there are mechanics but then it comes down to uncertainty about the target/goal, either not focusing on that target/goal or not committing to the target/goal.)
- What do you think keeps you from committing to that “target/goal” as you shoot? (Walk them through this also - Not sure you will be successful or where the goalie will go – ultimately they are afraid they are going to miss – the fear of failure)
- Just like you need a goal and need to commit to that goal in shooting a soccer ball, the same is true in life. You get “shots at life” all throughout the day in the way of activities and relationships at school, after school, at home.
- You need to pick your target/”goal” for those activities just like you pick your target/goal when you shoot the soccer ball.
- Let me give you an example. If you’re in class, the target/goal is to learn. If you don’t focus on that or get distracted by something or someone during class, you will miss learning and the reason you are at school, just like you miss a soccer shot.
- Or let’s say you are spending time with your friends playing video games. Now what would be the target for that activity? (Having fun.) If you get distracted from that goal and make it all about winning, you could easily miss the fun.
- You see - If you don’t focus on that target or aren’t committed to that target, then you will miss at those opportunities just like you miss a soccer shot.

Biblical Truth: – We need a unifying target/goal for all the activities of our lives.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- For just a moment now, I want you to think what a target/goal might be for all of your life activities.
- In the Bible, the apostle Paul says – “We make it our goal to please God” in whatever we do. (2 Corinthians 5:9) The target or goal for all Paul did was to please God.



- How do we do that? In another place, Paul tells some friends of his – “Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31) To glorify God is to “show him off,” to make him famous. We do that when our character – the way we are inside and how we act from that inside – is like God’s character.
- As we are and act this way, then more and more people see God’s character. This shows him off and pleases him.
- From today, I want you to think about, “What is your goal/target?” I want you to consider making your goal to please God in all you do by being and acting like him in all you do.

Week 5 – “LEAN IN”

Purpose – To demonstrate the importance of being “all in.”

Soccer Skill:

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 or shooting drills (the same principle applies).

Comments - (Make age appropriate.)

- Put your plant foot next to the ball with your toe pointing to the target.
- With the inside of your kicking foot, contact the middle of the ball.
- Make sure your ankle is locked.
- Put your weight forward and over the ball when you kick.
- The tendency we want to avoid here is “hanging back” or leaning back so that your weight is not over but behind the ball.
- What happens if we don’t lean forward or into the pass or

Life Principle: Going all in or committing to what you are doing.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- Why would we lean back when we were passing the ball? (We are reluctant or unsure.)



- Why would we be reluctant or unsure? (Not sure of what we are doing or afraid of failing)
- How do you overcome that reluctance?
 - o Learn the mechanics - the more we practice the mechanics, the more confident we become.
 - o Commit to the pass/shot – regardless of the results.
- To make a good pass or shot we need to lean in, have our weight over the ball, committed to making the pass or shot, regardless of the results.
- This reluctance and the opposite, the need to be committed, are not just important in soccer but also in your life.
- Think for a moment where you might be reluctant or tentative. Some of you may be reluctant in a certain subject in school or around certain people at school.
- Your reluctance comes from the same place that it does on the soccer field – you may not think you know what you are doing and you may be afraid to fail.
- The way you overcome in life is just like on the soccer field. You need to learn the mechanics of that situation and practice them. Then you need to commit to it regardless of the results.

Biblical Truth: – When we fully commit to whatever we do, God will reward us regardless of the results.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- In the Bible, the Apostle Paul, one of the early followers of Jesus and a leader among Christianity, wrote to some followers about the Christian life. In this letter, he spoke about this problem of “leaning back,” lacking commitment to what we are doing. He said, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.” (Colossians 3:23)
- In that passage, he tells us the key to overcoming this fear. We don’t need to be afraid to fail. When we “lean in” to whatever we do, God will reward us - regardless of the results.
- So whether it is a soccer pass/shot or making a new friend – “lean in.” Commit your whole heart to it, trusting God to reward your effort.

Week 6 – “DEFENSIVE POSITION”

Purpose – To learn the significance of the proper defensive position.

Soccer Skill:

Drills you could use – Pass goes to the attacker at the 25 yard line with the defender approaching from the 18 yard line to stop penetration/shot from the attacker

Comments - (Make age appropriate.)

- The defender's primary job is to deny penetration. The defender does this by preventing the attacker from dribbling toward the goal or shooting.
- When the pass goes to the attacker, you the defender run toward the attacker as rapidly as possible but slowing as you get close, stopping at 2 yards from the attacker.
- The defender should be positioned between the attacker and the goal in a ready position to move with the attacker.
- As the attacker tries to move forward, the defender keeps between the attacker and the goal and pressures the player away from the goal, while closing the gap between the defender and the attacker.
- The defender is now running in the same direction as the attacker, pushing the attacker outside and away from the goal. When close enough, the defender should kick the ball away from the attacker.

Life Principle: We need the proper defensive position to handle threats.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- What makes a good defender in soccer? (Need to recognize where the attackers are. Need to value keeping them from scoring. Need to keep in the right position to keep them from scoring. Need to know the right time to stop the attack and take away the ball.)
- Soccer is not the only place we need to defend ourselves. Think for a moment of the threats in your life, people or influences that might try to attack you. How many of you have had someone who tried to convince you to do something you knew you shouldn't do? This is an example of a threat. Can you think of other threats? How about this – have you ever just thought about doing something that you knew was wrong? No person gave you that idea. You just thought it up yourself.

- (Depending on ages, this could just be other children who are trying to influence them to do something they know is wrong. However, it would be good if they could see the threat they have within.)
- We learn from soccer that the best way to defend ourselves is to be aware of where those attackers are and in a proper position to stop them.
- Sometimes though, it may just seem like those threats are too powerful for us to handle on our own. We just can't resist. We need help to defend ourselves.



Biblical Truth: – God will give them strength to resist these attackers – whether from the outside or from within them.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- In the Bible, the Apostle Paul that I have told you all about, this early follower of Jesus and leader in Christianity, wrote to another group of Christians about how to handle these attackers. He said, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- We learn from these verses that we can count on God to give us that help when we face threats we think we can't handle – even the threats that come from within ourselves.
- What a great promise! God will not let a threat that we can't handle come our way and will give us a way out. So let's have the position of trusting him for dealing with those threats.

Week 7 – “ENCOURAGE OTHERS”

Purpose – To show the players the value of encouragement.

Soccer Skill:

Drills you could use – Any drill

Comments - (Make age appropriate.)

- We have been together for several weeks now.
- Today, I want to focus on encouragement during this practice.
- Whenever you see someone trying or succeeding, I want you to say something to them about that.
- You might say, “Good try, (name).” Or “Great pass,” (name).
- All through practice, I want us to try to do this.

Life Principle: We need the encouragement of others to succeed.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- What encouragement did you get today? (Point these out.)
- What did you offer? (Point these out.)
- How did that feel as you got encouraged by others on the team?
- How did it feel when you tried to encourage others?
- We need that encouragement. It helps us when we are working on something and not making progress or when we are making progress.
- What is the opposite of encouragement? (criticism)
- How does it feel to be criticized?
- Which is easier – to encourage or criticize?

Biblical Truth: – God wants us to use our words to encourage others.

Comments – (Make age appropriate. During practice.)

- This same author Paul wrote to a group of Christians about this and said, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is

helpful for building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” Ephesians 4:29

- Paul understood that our words can tear down or build up.
- I want this team to be a team that builds us.
- We need it. Just as in soccer, it helps us press on in life.