

# BASKETBALL LEAGUE DEVOTIONS

## Parent Companion Guide

UPWARD  
SPORTS

### PRACTICE 8

#### The GOOD NEWS

is that Jesus died on the cross  
to save us from our sins.

#### KEY VERSE

**JESUS TOLD HIM, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. NO ONE  
CAN COME TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME."**

**JOHN 14:6 (NLT)**

**Bottom Line: Jesus came to rescue us.**

Think about some of the most famous athletes of all time. LeBron James. Venus and Serena Williams. Lionel Messi. These athletes know their sport inside and out. They have spent most of their lives studying their game. They know a huge amount about what to do to be successful, to win. But guess what? Sometimes they make mistakes. Even though they know exactly what to do, sometimes even they—as great as they are—can't follow through. No one is perfect.

Did you know that's true when it comes to our relationship with God, too? We can read the whole Bible a hundred times. We can go to church every week. We can spend our lives learning about God. But no matter how much you know about God, no matter how much you try to be obedient to Him, you will still mess up sometimes. We all do. No one is perfect.

But making a mistake in sports is different from disobeying God. Mistakes are on accident. Sin, or disobeying God, is not on accident. It's on purpose, whether we realize it or not. Sin is doing our own thing instead of doing what God has told us is the right thing. We sin when we do things like lie, cheat, disobey our parents, or hurt someone else. The Bible says that we all do these things. We all sin.

Sin hurts our relationship with God. God created us, He loves us, and He wants to be with us. But God is also holy and perfect. Sin is us going against Him and what He has told us is right and true, so it separates us from Him. Because of sin, we are all lost. We've wandered away from God, and we have no way to get back to Him on our own.

But guess what? God loves us so much that He sent His son, Jesus, to rescue us. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." (John 14:6, NLT) Jesus is the only way back to God. But how does that work?

Jesus came to earth a long, long time ago. He was born as a baby like you or me. He grew up. He spent time with His family, He made friends, He worked. And then He started teaching God's truth.

## PRACTICE 8

## Good News

He started doing amazing things, like healing people. He asked people to follow Him because He could show them how God wants us to live. And while Jesus did all of that, He never sinned. Not once. Some people got mad that Jesus said He was the way to God. They arrested Him and nailed Him to a cross. Jesus died. But three days later, He came back to life! He appeared to many of His followers before He went back to heaven, where He is still alive today!

Jesus is our way back to God because He paid the price for all our sins when He died on the cross. For your sin and for mine. The Bible says the consequence of sin is death and being separated from God forever. But when Jesus died, He took our punishment Himself, so when we ask God to forgive us for our sins, He will—because Jesus took the consequences and made a way for us to be forgiven. And when Jesus rose again, He defeated death. If we trust in Jesus, when we die, we get to live with Him in heaven forever instead of being separated from God.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He is our way back to God. When we believe in Jesus, He gives us new life, and He gives us the Holy Spirit, who helps us live in a way that follows God's truth and God's plan for our lives. If we ask Him, Jesus will come and find us and bring us to God. Jesus came to rescue us from sin and death.

*If you or your child have questions about what all of this means, or you are ready to trust in Jesus to save you, contact your League Director or your coach. They'd love to talk to you.*

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

(Apply to Any Grade This Week)

- What is sin?
- What did Jesus do to rescue us? What did He rescue us from?
- What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me"? (John 14:6, NLT)

## GOING DEEPER

This week, spend time reading John 19-20 with your child and talk about this account of Jesus' death and resurrection. Ask them why they think Jesus had to go through these terrible things. Why does it matter that He rose from the dead three days later? What does all of this mean for us? Finally, read John 3:16. What does this verse say about why Jesus died?