

**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

Champion Parent Note

Educating Parents and Developing Champion Athletes

Justice



Building Positive Relationships is KEY to Character Development Through Sport. Here's How Parents Can Assist.

Last month, we focused on the four Cardinal Virtues for sport parents. This month, we will zoom in specifically on the virtue of **JUSTICE** as it relates to **Relationships** in the GROW (G + R + O = W) approach to whole athlete development. Sport parents can assist their children in building positive Relationships in the sport environment that will contribute to their overall GROWth. While encouraging this relationship development, sport parents are teaching and encouraging their children to understand and live the Cardinal Virtue of Justice.

Parents should help their child athletes foster healthy relationships with teammates, opponents, referees, and coaches. Building positive relationships not only increases team stability, cohesion and performance, but it increases athletes' opportunities to feel successful and builds individual player satisfaction.

Parental Tips:

- Love your children unconditionally, regardless of sports performance.
- Model positive relationships in your interaction with others, including coaches, referees, and opponents.
- Be respectful guests at your child's athletic competitions. The game belongs to the kids (and can go on without the spectators)!
- Assist your children in learning more about and including all of their teammates.
- Promote encouragement of teammates, talk through your child's criticisms of others (coaches, teammates, opponents).
- Emphasize care and respect for all in the sport environment - both on your team and the other team.

Suggestions

As parents, help athletes to feel positively connected to all those involved in the sports experience. This enables young people to form compassion, respect and a sense of fairness (justice) for all.

Help your child consider ways in which s/he can exhibit a greater amount of respect for those in sport: his/her coaches, teammates, opponents and officials. Examples might include thanking the coach after practice, encouraging a lesser-skilled teammate, congratulating an opponent on a great play, or shaking the official's hand before or after the game. Constantly refer to the Golden Rule as a guide for behavior: "Treat others as you would like to be treated."

Sport Parents: Remember to Pray with Your Athlete!

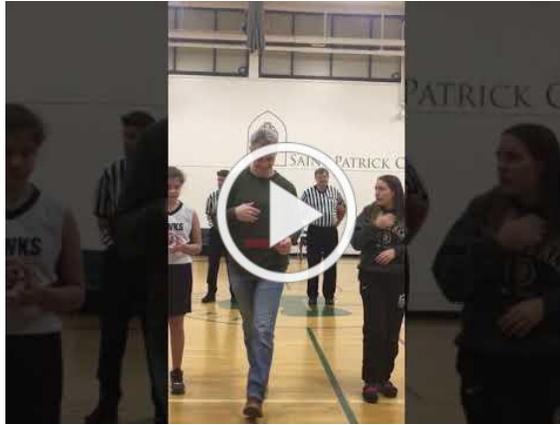
As parents, it is important to pray *for* and *with* our children. Create a culture of prayer in your family, including prayer around athletics.

Play Like a Champion has created a [Novena to St. Sebastian, Patron Saint of Athletes](#).

A **novena** (from Latin: *novem*, "nine") is an ancient tradition of devotional praying that consists of prayers repeated for nine successive days or weeks. During a novena, the devotees make petitions, implore favors, and obtain graces by asking for the intercession of saints in our faith tradition.

We invite your family to pray this Novena with your Athletes, knowing that Play Like a Champion families across the country are engaging in this same prayer tradition. Also, encourage your athlete to take the novena to their team to pray together.

Watch this video for a positive example of prayer led by sport parents in the Seattle CYO!



A Sport Parent's Prayer for Justice



Dear Lord,

I praise you for the dormancy of wintertime. May I use these days to reflect upon my many blessings, namely the incredible gift of my children.

Guide me Lord in being a positive role model for my children. In particular help me to model respectful relationships within the sport arena. Help me to encourage all the athletes on my child's team and the other

team; remind me to be respectful of the officials; guide me in welcoming our opponents to the contest.

Lord, you are within me and within all around me. Give me the grace to be kind, loving and giving to all those in the athletic arena as I live and model justice for my child athlete. Amen.

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