

## Minister Plan - Spectator's Playbook #1

- Gather in a quiet place without the children. Another adult needs to watch the team while the adults talk.
- Have each parent and coach introduce him/herself and their family.
- Explain that the purpose of this meeting is to organize the season so that all parents have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the goals of the coaches.

Present these statements:

This group will be a true community for the duration of this season. All adults must be willing to be a working part of the community.

Parents and coaches should come to an agreement about what is expected from parents during the season. Include logistics such as: giving out a schedule of games, making a schedule for the concession stand if parents are needed to staff it, when and where practices will be, uniform requirements, who will bring drinks or snacks if that is a requirement, and any other practical organizational matters.

Then, the coach and parents should come to an agreement as to what is expected of parents behavior during games. The coach must tell parents if calling out correction to their children is OK with the coach. A statement needs to be made that angry outbursts will effect all children and will not be tolerated. Parents need to be told that positive reinforcement of all children – even the opposing team – is the only Christian way to speak during a game. In the privacy of their own home, parents can say whatever they want, as long as their child cannot hear them. Negative comments about a teammate, coach or member of the opposing team is not helpful to the child and makes them feel uncomfortable in their athletic community. This negativity cannot help a child be a better player or enjoy the experience of sports more.

Suggest a signal that can be given if a parent is getting out of hand – whether by a designated “buddy”, the team minister, or coach. Parents must understand that it helps them to act in the best interests of their children if others can help them to recognize negative behavior before it gets worse. ALL adults are present to make sports a good place for ALL children.

Have the team minister take notes and compile a list of agreed upon responsibilities and guidelines for behavior. This list needs to be in the hands of parents BEFORE the first game as a reminder of the wishes of this sports team community.

- Give out card #1.

## Minister Plan - Spectator's Playbook #2

- Gather parents in a quiet place.
- Present the following scenario: You are watching your child's game and it seems very obvious to you that one of the umpires is making bad calls against your team only. The coach is not doing anything about it and you are getting more angry. The parents around you agree that this situation is unfair. What do you do?
- Ask parents to make suggestions.

Make the following statements:

Every person makes mistakes – even those who are supposed to make every call correctly.

It is impossible for a parent who is not standing in the umpire's shoes to see the field through his/her eyes. Even standing behind home plate does not tell you the exact spot where the ball crosses the plate. It is not possible to make umpires calls from the stands.

It is the responsibility of the coach to approach an issue of officiating. When a coach disagrees with a situation that comes up in a game, and that coach cannot be satisfied with the umpires ruling, the coach must protest the game immediately. Once the game ends, and a protest has not been made, the game is finished and there is no other opportunity for a grievance. If the coach does not see a problem, there is nothing a parent can or should do except show good sportsmanship and be quiet.

If a parent has a problem with a coach or his/her decisions, the time to discuss that is away from game or practice, when both parties are calm and there are not children who can hear their conversation. Both people must listen respectfully and work toward common agreement. Any unresolved conflict should be brought to the parish CYO board quietly – there is no need to drag other parents into the disagreement.

A parent's disregard for authority will be a quickly taught attitude – no parent wants to teach their child to be disrespectful of adults because the first person the child will disrespect is the parent.

- Give out card #2.

### **Minister Plan - Spectator's Playbook #3**

- Gather parents in a quiet place.
- Ask parents to remember their most wonderful memory of sports – as a participant or spectator. Visualize that for about 20 seconds.
- Ask parents to recall their most unpleasant memory of sports, one they would not like to happen to their child. Visualize for 20 seconds also.
- Ask parents to decide if the rest of their sports memories would land closer to the positive memory or the negative memory.
- Allow discussion.

Present the following statements:

Our view of life is colored by our memories up to this point.

Our expectations are that what happened to us will also happen to our children.

We seek to protect our children from what hurt us and hope that they will experience the same joys that we felt.

**BUT,**

Our children are not us. They may be like us in certain ways, but they are not an exact copy.

The people in our children's lives are not the same people that were in ours.

Our children have the right to experience sports in their own way.

Our job is to assist our children in decoding the experiences they have.

We will overreact if we allow old memories to influence our response to the situations we see in sports. We will interfere in the ability of our child to navigate his/her life.

- Give out card #3.

## Minister Plan - Spectator's Playbook #4

- Gather parents in a quiet place.
- Ask parents to respond to this statement:
- “If I see my child making a mistake on the field, I should correct him quickly so that he will not make the mistake again and hurt his team.”
- Allow for discussion.

Present the following statements:

Children try very hard to please their parents.

A child will respond to their parent's voice above all others.

Any voice that interrupts a game will distract ALL of the children.

The parent is NOT the coach of this game, no matter how much experience he or she has as a player or coach up to this moment.

The very best time to discuss a mistake made by your child is TOMORROW, when the emotions of the game have cooled and your child is receptive to correction. Give your child the gift of time and the chances are that the conversation will be much more effective.

- Give out card #4.