



All-Age Service Toolkit

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Bible Reading: Matthew 25:14-30

Background Notes

- This toolkit has been created to help you create an all-age service to celebrate National Sports Sunday and all things sport!
- This service uses the text of Matthew 25:14-30; perhaps best known as the Parable of the Talents. In the service, we explore what it means for us to use whatever God has given us for his glory.

- Imagine discovering for the first time that God is interested in sport and that the things that excite and interest you, the things you are good at are not in conflict with being a Christian, but that God has created you to be like this and he celebrates when he sees this in you! This service gives people of all ages the opportunity to hear and celebrate that together, and to explore how we can use our sporting 'talents' wisely.

- Under each heading, you will find a number of suggested elements. Choose those which best meet the needs of your church to create your all-age service plan.

01.**Introductory Activities****- Sports Day relay**

Set up a simple relay race in the aisles or at the front of the room in which you are meeting, featuring some favourite School Sports Day ingredients; egg and spoon, obstacles, beanbags on heads etc. Choose some volunteers of all ages to form two teams to compete in a race against one another. You could divide the congregation into two teams to cheer for each team as they run the race, and you could provide a small prize for the winning team.

- Cheer it

Invite the congregation to call out some of the teams they support, and to share some of the chants they use. Teach the congregation a simple clapping chant to celebrate Jesus. You could use it again later in the service during the sung worship time.

- Quiz

Before the service, gather together 3 or 4 well-known members of your church community and ask them for a surprising sporty fact about themselves, perhaps they once played cricket for the county, or once fell backward off the trampoline at school. Gather the volunteers at the front of the church and read each fact in turn, asking the congregation to call out who they think each fact belongs to, before revealing the answers at the end.

02.**Sharing the Text**

- Read the text and ask the congregation to gather together in small all-age groups to talk about what this parable may look like in a sporty context. What could the talents represent when we think about those who play sport? What might this mean to someone who supports those in sport? When they are ready, you may choose to invite some feedback the different scenarios they talked about.

- If you have a drama group, or some willing volunteers who can take some time to prepare, give them a copy of the text and ask them to create a sports-based retelling of the story. What are the talents in the new version of the story? What do the players choose to do with them? Invite them to perform their retelling of the story, after which you could ask the congregation to guess the parable, or perhaps read the text.



03.

Talk Outline

- Have you ever thought about what the Bible has to say about sport? Did David defeat Goliath because he was good at shotput? Did Jesus grow up playing football with his friends? The Bible may appear not to have a lot to say explicitly about sport, but if that were true, the same could be said about journalism or going to school or shopping or going to work on Monday morning.

- We know that the Bible doesn't work like that and we also know that God is interested in the whole of our lives, why? Because he created us, he knows and loves us and cares about us, just as he cares about every other person in the human race. He cares about our emotional and physical wellbeing, he cares about the things we're interested in, he cares about us using the gifts and skills he has created and put inside each of us.

- In the reading today, Jesus gave a warning not to waste the things that God has given us, hiding them away to keep them safe; he wants us to use them and grow them and be fully alive in him.

- That's the same for the sporting abilities, gifts, talents and skills that God has put in us. If we use what God has given us to the best of our abilities then we can honour him in that too, whether it's playing for our school team, taking time to kick a ball around with our mates or even participating at a competitive level.

- And what about those of us who may not be totally comfortable in the world of sport; those of us who tend to avoid the gym or the sports club, is this for us? Of course it is, because God has created us to be in a community together. If our talent is baking, then maybe we can drop off a few cakes at the cricket match next Saturday, if those we know and love are passionate about sport, we can take some time to invest in them and support them in that, if our gifts are found in pastoral care, then maybe we can use those to get alongside a local sports club and support them in that.

- Take a moment to reflect on what is in your hand, what is it that God has trusted to you. How are you going to use that?

- Play one of the following film clips:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5h_4Lrt761E or
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmaWoTN9k_w
- Invite a guest speaker who is a Christian and has an interest in sport, this could be a member of your own congregation, a locally well-known sports person, or a chaplain to a local sports team to come and share their testimony, talking about their relationship with sport and their relationship with God. They may be able to prepare a short talk to give or this may work more effectively if you conduct it as an interview.



- Invite members of the church community to bring with them to the service something which represents their involvement in sport, such as a pair of football boots, tennis racket or towel etc. Invite them to bring their objects up to the front, or to hold them up where they are, as you pray, thanking God for the gifts he has given each of us, and for the opportunities we have to use those gifts. Take the opportunity to invite those who wish to, to commit these gifts to God's service and pray that He will take them and use them for His glory.
- Gather members of the congregation together in small all-age groups and give each group a different sports ball. Invite them to pass the ball around their group, when they hold the ball, they can pray aloud in their small group, or pass the ball on, if they prefer.
- A prayer:
Creator God,
Thank you for the gifts of sport that we can use and enjoy. Thank you for the opportunities sport gives us; to be healthy, to improve mental health, to meet other people, to travel and to know what it is to be fully alive. Help us, this day and always to remember the one who has given us these gifts and to use them for your glory. Send us out into your world, ready to love all those you have created who we meet in every sphere of our lives.
Amen.

- Further prayer resources can be found at nationalsportssunday.org.uk

06.

Song Suggestions

- I'm gonna jump up and down, Doug Horley
- Let everything that has breath, Matt Redman
- Help me be your hands Lord Jesus, Doug Horley
- Here I am, wholly available, Chris Bowater
- Every step, Nick and Becky Drake
- 'm gonna run, Nigel Hemming
- Mission's Flame, Matt Redman
- Guide me oh thou great Jehovah, William Williams

07.

Live It Out

-- What are the talents God has given to you? Are you investing them well? How do you play your sport in a way that remembers the God who gave you these talents? How can you get alongside your local sporting community and be salt and light in their midst?

