

PLAYING FOOT-BALL IN THE TEAM OF CHRIST

Intent of these jottings.

- ✓ *To understand the meaning of "vocation" in the context of Christian life.*
- ✓ *To impress on all Christians have a vocation, a call from Jesus; namely, a place, a specific role to play in life as Christians.*
- ✓ *To foster generosity to follow Christ's call and play the role expected from each one of us.*

Target Audience:

Boys, Youngsters and Youth

With adaptations it will be suitable to other audiences.

Step 1. Introductory Session:

Singing hymns or bhajans.

Opening prayer.

Forming small groups of about 6 participants each.

Step 2. Input-Talk-Presentation of Today's Theme

Instructions for the moderator:

- ✓ Tell the participants to be attentive to the talk, as they will have to write some points on what it will be said.
- ✓ As the talk goes on request them to take some jottings
- ✓ The presentation is based on comparing our Christian Life to a Foot-ball Game.
- ✓ If you offer this exercise to other audiences, adapt it to their situation (*You may change the comparison we make of the foot-ball game, to another activity where each one has a specific role to play for instance, an orchestra, a theatrical performance and the like*)

Introductory talk

First Part:

"The Foot-ball Game"

A comparison.

Begin by Questioning the audience:

What items are wanted to play a foot-ball game?

Get their answers from the floor and write them on the board.

Expected answers:

1. A foot-ball ground. or stadium
2. Boys or players who want to play,
3. Two captains,
4. A foot-ball ground
5. A foot-ball, etc
6. A referee..

(If the expected answers are not given by the audience, supply them on your own)

Keep question the participants.

Well, after we have the ground, the players, the captains, etc...how do we organize ourselves to play? :

- 1) Each team has to have the captain.
- 2) Next the captain chooses and calls his players to build his team.
- 3) Finally, the captain assigns to each player the particular place or role he wants him to play: Forward, Back, Goalie, . Mid fielder, etc.

FIVE CONCLUSIONS.

Write the conclusions on the bard.

- 1) The captain freely chooses the players whom he wants.
- 2) The chosen players are free to accept or to refuse the call or invitation to join his team.
- 3) Next the captain, will assign to each player the position or role to play within the game as he thinks best for the team..
- 4) The team members –without exception - will have to play, the game assigned to them by the captain to best of their abilities – wither they like it or not -
- 5) All have to play an unselfish game, not for their own popularity, but for the success of their team..

Second Part: Our Christian Game, Our Christian Vocation
(The reality)

Hints for the Moderator Introductory Remarks.

- ✓ In the world, there is a most exciting game going on, even better than the most trilling Foot-ball
- ✓ On earth, there is a never ceasing game, a struggle against evil, sin, oppression, injustice, vice, ignorance.
- ✓ The whole span of the earth is a real playground.
- ✓ It's wonderful! It's magnificent! It brings joy, meaning and satisfaction.

Questioning the audience:

- ✓ Who is the Captain in this game?
Our Lord Jesus Christ. Describe Him in the most appealing and attractive way possible Jesus' charm and attractiveness, his personality.
- ✓ His game, his work and task is wonderful, namely, to free the world from violence, from injustice, hatred and suffering.
- ✓ To bring joy and happiness to all men and women, to build the kingdom of God on earth.
- ✓ Who are his players? Who form his team?
You and I. We and all who have been called to follow Jesus Christ. All the baptized.
- ✓ Describe vividly, who Christians are, and what they are supposed to do

FIVE CONCLUSIONS

(They are supposed to have been written on the board)

1st. Christ is our captain. Because He loved us, because He wanted us, He chose us freely to join his team

How wants us to join him, to play for him, to work for him, to win with him..

2nd. We are free to accept his call and invitation or to reject it.

Do you really want to join Jesus in his team?

Do you want freely and joyfully to be a Christian?

3rd. Next, as our captain He assigns to each one of us - his players - the positions or roles he wants us to play in this world, yes, the role or vocation within his team that he thinks be best for welfare of the world and the building of his kingdom on earth.

4th. We, therefore, and all the team members –without exception – have to play now, in the game of Jesus, the roles assigned to as by Him, to the best of our abilities.

Are you ready to take up any job, any assignment, any work, he wants you to?

These or those particular places or roles he wants us to play are, ordinarily speaking, called vocations: such as: Marriage, Priesthood, Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Missionary Life, etc.

Different jobs like Doctor, Nurse, Teacher, Social Worker, Writer, Artist, Politician, etc. are vocations too. Are you ready to take up any of these Vocations if Jesus wants you to?

5th. All of us, in whatever vocation we have been called to, have to play them in an unselfish manner, not for our benefit, but for the good of others and the spreading of God's kingdom on earth.

No idle players are allowed in the team of Jesus. Whether we marry or join the priesthood or the religious life, we are **equally** expected to work hard for Jesus, for our neighbors, for the salvation of our world from sin, hatred, oppression and injustice.

Corolary: Discern Your Vocation.

Keep in mind: all players have to play for the good of the team, not for themselves or for their sweet pleasure.

Some people say: I am ready to play anywhere Jesus wants me to play; yes, I am ready for any vocation, but how can I know which the place Jesus wants me to play is? What is my vocation?

Pray and reflect:

1. Keeping in mind the circumstances of your life, and your qualities and talents, what sort of life can you lead that you may serve others and God best?
2. Where you can be of greater use to Jesus to make this world a better one?
 - That particular place or role will be your Vocation.
 - Christ cannot but wish you to do what is best for all.
 - Think... Ponder... Discern... Which is your best game in Jesus' team?

Summary of the Session in a table form

PLAYING FOOT-BALL	PLAYING FOR CHRIST
<u>Requirements.</u>	<u>Requirements</u>
1. A big Playground.	1. The entire world.
2. A Captain.	2. Christ Our Lord.
3. Players. A team.	3. All those called by Christ form the team of Christ. We call the team of Christ “The Church” and the team mates “Christians”
4. An opposing Team.	4. A Sinful world The evil-one. Hatred Exploitation, Aversion from God.
5. A Will to strive to win the Trophy.	5. .A Desire to win every human person, nay, the entire world for Christ. To make our world the Kingdom of Christ. A Kingdom of peace, justice and love..
<u>Conditions:</u>	<u>Conditions:</u>
1. Being invited or called by the Captain.	1. Called by Christ to join his team, at Baptism.
2. Accepting the invitation or call to play in his team.	2. Consciously accepting the Call of Christ , especially at Confirmation. We name this call to join Christ’s Team – “His Church”, a General Vocation.
3. Willingness to play under the leadership of the Captain.	3. Willingness to follow Jesus and be his disciple for the rest of one’s life.
4. Dedication and unselfish service of the team..	4. Absolute dedication to Christ as team members for the good of all men & women under His Leadership.
5. Obedience to the Captain as regards in what place and in what way to play for the victory of the team.	5. Unconditional and unswerving obedience to Christ in particular as what to play and where and how to play for the victory of His team. We name that special call to play within his team in a particular and special way as Particular Vocation.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Activity No 1 Question Hour.

Soon after the talk. ask the participants to write in small pieces of paper any queries, questions, doubts and other information they may like to clarify or have about vocation, choice of life, professions, marriage. Priesthood, religious life, vows, etc...
They will place them in a box lying in the middle of the room. .

“Question Bowl”

- ✓ All will sit in a circle.
- ✓ The “Question Box will be kept in the middle of the circle.
- ✓ By rotation, one participant at a time, will come to the middle and at random pick one question, read it aloud and try to answer it as well as he can.
- ✓ He may ask help from any of members of the group.
- ✓ The moderator will add his comments if he is not fully satisfied with the answers given
- ✓ If he feels it fit, he may initiate a discussion on the topic.

Activity No 2 Essay Writing Competition:

Writing the Essays

The participants will be asked to write an essay: “*Every Christian is a Player in Christ's Team*”.

If need be, you may offer some guidelines;

- ✓ *In this world there is a game going on. Which? Where? How?...*
- ✓ *Christ is the Captain. What sort of captain is He?...*
- ✓ *He needs players... He chooses them... Whom? How? When?...*
- ✓ *Some accept the invitation, others do not...*
- ✓ *Those who accepted Christ's invitation will play in different positions... Which? Why? How?*
- ✓ *What about you? Will you play for Christ? How? Where?*

Rating the Essays in small groups.

Participants will make small groups of 6 to 8 each.
They will choose a chair-person and a secretary.
By turns they will read their essays.

At the end of each essay, the group members will rate the essay by giving marks from 1 to 10.

In secret, they will write their marks in small slips of paper and give them to the chair person.

At the end, the secretary will collect all the slips and declare the winning essay.

Reading of the Winning Essays to the House

The Prize Winners of each small group will read their Essays to the entire house. Prizes will be given to them.

APPENDIX Prayerful Reflection

Taken from the "The Foot-ball Match" of Kairos Slide Show

My Dear Lord Jesus.

As I sat on the stadium watching the match it seemed to me that my life was like this game. Everyone in this world has his position. And you, Lord, like a good trainer put him there. You need me. The others need me. We, in our turn, need you. We all are depending on each other

It doesn't matter what position I am in, whether it's in the attack or defense or in the goal.

What matters is my keenness, my commitment. Whether I'm up at the front or at the back, it doesn't matter. Whether I have got the ball, or whether marking an opponent, provided that I'm doing my best, all the time – Lord, when you look down the field of my life, am I really playing my part?

Or I am standing on the touchline, with my hands in my pockets, criticizing the way the others are playing? Am I keeping to my position? Am I really working together with my fellow players? Am I a selfish player, playing only to show off my talent? Or do I play so that the others have a fair chance to play their part in the game?

And the tricks that I use – are they anything more than rather skillful fouls, do I persevere to the end, even if I am fouled, or if I fail in my task? Or do I allow myself to be intimidated by the criticism of the rest of the team, or by the spectators

If I win applause or praise, do I get an inflated idea of my own worth? Do I simply give up if I encounter misunderstanding, protests and criticism?

I must admit, Lord that I have often wished to be somewhere other than where you have put me. But, am I not deceiving myself?

It doesn't matter in what position I'm playing and how I play. What matters is whether I throw myself into the game with all my strength at my command, until you blow the final whistle,

until you call an end to it.

And so. Lord, when you blow the whistle tomorrow for the start of the play, I will play on...

