

23 November 2016

Dear Coaches,

As Catholics, our faith is foundational to everything that we do. Pope Saint John Paul II taught us that, “Sports are a real school of true human virtue” (Pope John Paul II speaks to Athletes, Oct 29, 2000). Through your leadership, the athletes learn how to communicate, encourage others, handle stress and disappointment, work as a team and celebrate victories. As coaches, you are in a unique position to evangelize and give witness to our Catholic faith as you lead your team. I am confident that as they look back on their time with CYO sports, our athletes will not necessarily remember the winning or losing season but the impact that their coach had on them as a person. As you well know, faith is more caught than taught.

The 2016-2017 Youth Ministry theme is “I Thirst.” The Diocesan theme, “I Will Love,” compliments ours and is a beautiful response to Christ’s thirst for us. We have also chosen a patron saint for Youth Ministry who is St. Mother Teresa. To give you an idea of how we are implementing the theme, the middle school students are focusing each week on what it means to know Jesus: How can we hear His call of “I Thirst” or respond with “I Will Love” if we do not know Him, speak to Him, or spend time with Him?

As you know, the first step in building that relationship with Christ is to invite Him into our life—in all that we do, including our practices and games. Fr. Whitestone and I would like to invite you to please begin and end each practice and game with a prayer.

I have attached 15 weeks of brief reflections to take you through the season: Mother Teresa’s 15 Tips to Cultivate Humility. They are brief statements; my suggestion is to read them aloud a couple times, and then talk about a way that your players can grow in that aspect of humility. How will it help them be grow closer to Jesus and be a better player?

Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication. Please know of my prayers for you. May God Bless you, and have a wonderful basketball season!

In Christ,

Mrs. Melissa Rihl
Director of Youth Ministry
St. Leo the Great Catholic Church

2016-2017 Prayers and Reflections for Basketball Practices

“If you are humble, nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are. If you are blamed, you will not be discouraged. If they call you a saint, you will not put yourself on a pedestal.” –St. Mother Teresa

Read each reflection a couple of times, pause to think about what is being said, and then spend a couple minutes discussing.

Week	Opening Prayer (Beginning of Practice/Game)	Reflection (Either at the beginning, middle or end of practice). Mother Teresa’s 15 Tips to Cultivate Humility	Closing Prayer (End of Practice)
1	“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”	Speak as little as possible about yourself. -Why do you think that it is difficult to look at the achievements or blessings of others and not think about yourself?	Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!
2	“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”	Keep busy with your own affairs and not those of others. - Do you find it tempting to talk (gossip) about others? How can you stop gossip when you hear it happening around you?	Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!
3	“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”	Avoid curiosity. (referring to wanting to know things that should not concern you) -When you hear about something that does not involve you, what is one way that you can change the topic (and avoid gossip)?	Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!
4	“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”	Do not interfere in the affairs of others. -Do not get in the middle of someone else’s business. Pray for your friend(s) instead.	Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!
5	“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams	Accept small irritations with good humor. -What does Mother T mean by this?	Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each

	who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”	-When we get really annoyed (by siblings, friends, parents, classmates, etc.), we need to be able to laugh NOT at the people, but the situation. How can you take a step back and laugh?	person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!
6	“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”	Do not dwell on the faults of others. -No body is perfect, and we need to see the beam in our own eye first before we point out the splinter in someone else’s.	Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!
7	“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”	Accept censures even if unmerited. (<i>Censure means formal disapproval</i>) -Referring to be being obedient not only to parents (Fourth Commandment) but to those who have authority over you. -If you have done something wrong and your parent or teacher calls you out, you need to own up to it. -If you are called out and you feel that it was incorrect, do not be disrespectful and fight back. Instead, calmly discuss. -Has this ever happened during a game or practice?	Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!
8	“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”	Give in to the will of others. -Go with the flow, but remain rooted in Truth.	Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!

<p>9</p>	<p>“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”</p>	<p>Accept insults and injuries. -The Beatitudes teach us, “Blessed are you when they insult and persecute you” which is balanced by St. Paul to Timothy who said, “If you deny me, I will deny you before my heavenly father.” -At some point in life, you will be insulted because of your Catholic faith. Stand firm, offer it to Jesus, and unite your sufferings with Him.</p>	<p>Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”</p>	<p>Accept contempt, being forgotten and disregarded. -How can we “lose ourselves” and follow Jesus? -Will we get ourselves back if we do so?</p>	<p>Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”</p>	<p>Be courteous and delicate even when provoked by someone. -Always be open, honest, direct and kind. -Has there been a time during a practice or game that it was hard to remain courteous? How did you handle it?</p>	<p>Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”</p>	<p>Do not seek to be admired and loved. -We are loved and adored by God our Father. Often, we don’t stop to reflect on that, and instead seek to be admired and loved by everyone BUT God. -What is one way that you can let yourself be loved by God the Father this week?</p>	<p>Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”</p>	<p>Do not protect yourself behind your own dignity. -We need to be able to do the hard things in life. -Why are we more concerned with our reputation than the dignity of others? -How can we care for those around us?</p>	<p>Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!</p>

<p>14</p>	<p>“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”</p>	<p><i>Give in, in discussions, even when you are right.</i> -What do you think Mother T means by this? -Is it better to leave a discussion when someone refuses to hear Truth? -If that happens, what do you do?</p>	<p>Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>“God our Father, thank You for this team of young people. Please bless our practice, our legs and arms, and keep us safe from injury. We also pray for the other teams who are practicing today. Our Father...Amen.”</p>	<p><i>Choose always the more difficult task.</i> -Love others first. -Why is it easier to take the easy way out? -Can you recall a time during a practice or game that you had the option of “choosing the more difficult task?” How did it go?</p>	<p>Go around and ask each player and coach to offer up a prayer intention, or something that they are thankful for. After each person has gone around the circle, close with a Hail Mary. St. Leo the Great and St. Mother Teresa, Pray for Us!</p>