



Champion Coach Note: Servant Leadership

Legendary basketball coach John Wooden said, "Happiness begins where selfishness ends." This Advent season we are called to put aside our selfish tendencies and go outside of ourselves by practicing servant leadership – a focus on the well-being and growth of our communities.

We are called to prepare ourselves for Christ's coming this Advent season by looking inward and by thinking about how we are using our gifts and talents to help one another. As a coach, challenge your athletes to live, as Pope Francis challenges, as "men and women who bring hope to others."

A key component of Catholic Social Teaching stresses stewardship – the responsibility each of us has to make a positive difference in the lives of others by sharing our gifts and talents: "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Pt 4:10). Baseball player Roberto Clemente was an excellent model of servant leadership. He gave so much of his time and money to improve his community back home in Puerto Rico ([his story](#)). He not only shared his athletic gifts on the baseball field, he also made a point to make a difference off of it.

Like Clemente, we're called to share our gifts outside of our sports. Pope Francis said, "Let us never forget that authentic power is service." Help your team remember this during Advent by setting aside time to interact in a positive way with your school, church, or local community. This Advent season make a commitment with your team to organize a community service project. Have your athletes host a fundraiser or bake sale with the proceeds going to



"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

~ Gandhi

Athlete Reflection

Watch this [Clip of Pope Francis](#) with your athletes and reflect on the questions:

1. What resources, talents, and abilities has God given me? Do I use them in service to others?
2. How can I be of help to others in recognizing and using the gifts that they've been given?
3. How can I make a difference in my community? In my school? On my team?
4. What can our team do together to serve our community?



charity. Plan a used sporting goods drive within the school community to donate to a youth center. Work at a homeless shelter or Catholic Worker house. Conduct a clinic in your sport for local youth athletes. Follow the example of Liverpool F.C. players and visit a local children's hospital together ([VIDEO](#)). When we reach beyond ourselves, we grow as disciples of Christ. As St. Francis of Assisi wrote, "It is in giving that we receive." Spread the hope and joy of this Advent season by making a difference in your community with your athletes today.

We wish you a Merry Christmas!

Coach notes will resume in the New Year.

God's Messengers are among us - how can we be a messenger as well? Continue to follow the Notre Dame [Advent Reflection Series](#)

Behold I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you."

~Third Sunday of Advent Gospel
Matthew 11:2-11