

October 1, 2018

Dear Parish Athletic Directors, Coordinators of Youth Ministry, Pastors, and Catechetical Leaders:

It is the goal of the Diocese of Columbus that sports programs offered through our parishes and schools be considered a form of ministry to foster physical, emotional, and spiritual growth in our young people being served. The Diocesan Recreation Association has been greatly aided in its effort to promote sports and coaching as ministry with the help of the *Play Like a Champion Today* Program. The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry which includes the Diocesan Recreation Association would like to propose an initiative that would foster a greater level of collaboration and participation among ministries in the parish and would lead to a deeper spiritual experience for young people involved in parish sports. In order for this initiative to be effective the main action on your part would be to have a few key conversations.

We invite you, Athletic Director, Coordinator of Youth Ministry, Catechetical Leader, and if possible pastor, sit down for 45- 60 minutes with each other and have a conversation about the sports programs in your parish. *Why would you meet?* You will find that youth ministers and catechetical leaders can be a valuable resource to coaches and athletic directors; athletic directors and coaches can help promote ministry programs that lead to spiritual growth; and, youth ministers and catechetical leaders can meet parents and youth they may not regularly see. Why not have a conversation which could possibly lead to more mutual support? *What will you talk about?* We have included six talking points that can guide your conversation.

With this letter we are also including two documents that you might find useful. First, "Ideas for Coaching as Ministry" was previously sent to AD's but we want to share it again. It contains suggested practices and techniques fostering a more spiritual environment on the playing field and gym. Second, you will find a suggestion sheet for the Coordinator of Youth Ministry: "Sports and Ministry; 15 Ways the CYM can work closely with parish and school sports." At some point in the current academic year, we will seek input from several parishes on what they have done to expand the spiritual dimension of sports and we will share the proven best practices with everyone.

We hope you see our invitation to have a conversation as a means to improve the effectiveness of all ministries in the parish that serve children and youth. We hope and pray that you have fruitful conversations. We look forward to you sharing your experiences with us.

Thank you for all that you do for young people in the name of Jesus and the Church.

Sincerely,

Mike Hall
Director OYYAM

Sean Robinson
Youth and Young Adult
Ministry Consultant

Marty Raines
Associate Director, Recreation