

**PLAY LIKE  
A CHAMPION  
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

## Champion Parent Note

Educating and Forming Champion Parents

### The Gift of Sport

This time of year, many of us are thinking about gifts. Whether for our children, family, friends or colleagues, the Christmas season is a beautiful opportunity to show our love and gratitude by giving gifts. Our children love to give gifts. What parent among us has not received a homemade gift from a beaming child? The child is so proud of his or her creation - maybe a colored picture or craft - and eager to show that their love for us is so great that they spent the time to make something special just for us. Does this not mean more to a parent than any treasure they could have purchased at a store? Isn't it the effort and time spent that makes this special?



Perhaps our children realize that *time* is the most valuable currency we have to offer. We demonstrate our priorities and our love for others by how we allocate our time each day, then often measure a life by how a person spent the time they had. If you've been to a *Play Like a Champion Today* parent workshop, you may have heard us mention that the Greek philosophers had two words for time. *Chronos* is the measure of time on a clock or calendar; this is the time we know well and use daily. Their other word, *Kairos*, is something altogether different. *Kairos* denotes the *right or opportune moment*, or is sometimes translated as *the Lord's time*. It is not a measure of passing time but a moment when something of dramatic importance occurs. It's a moment that happens not in the past or future, but in the present.

For the sports parent, *kairos* is where the magic happens. It's all too easy for us to dwell on what went wrong in the past or plan our child's athletic future [not to mention the rest of our busy lives]. But what would happen if we simply stayed in the present moment at our child's next game? *Play Like a Champion* believes that each moment a child participates in youth sports is something special. As parents, this should be our focus. Not later today, not tomorrow, not high school or college, just *now*.

***"In pure and creative sport we can see a reflection of God whose creative cosmic wisdom is portrayed in the Bible (Proverbs 8:30-31) as a young woman playing, dancing and exercising on the face of the earth. God loves to play, and so do we."*** ~ Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, *Sport for All Declaration*

Each and every moment our child participates is a gift for both the child and for us as parents. It's an opportunity for the child to experience the joy of play, to grow in friendship, virtue and skill, and to use the talents he or she has been given by God. It's also an opportunity for us as parents to enjoy watching our child, to recognize the beauty of what he or she is



experiencing and to demonstrate our love and support for that moment. It's not lost on us that the word "present" is often used as a synonym for the word "gift." When we watch our children play, they are giving us a gift. In turn, our presence can be a gift that demonstrates our unconditional love.

***"The Church always maintains that sport is a precious good that must be nurtured."*** ~ Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect for the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

Children have a remarkable ability to remain present in each moment. Our children are often lost in play during a game, unconcerned with anything other than what's happening on the court or field. As we make our way through the seasons of Advent and Christmas, let's take a moment to ponder the concept of *kairos* and consider how this manifests itself in our own experiences with our young athletes. Ask yourself if you can be more present in each game, setting aside daily concerns or a child's long-term athletic journey to just enjoy the moment. The future can wait, the present might just be the best gift you can give this month.

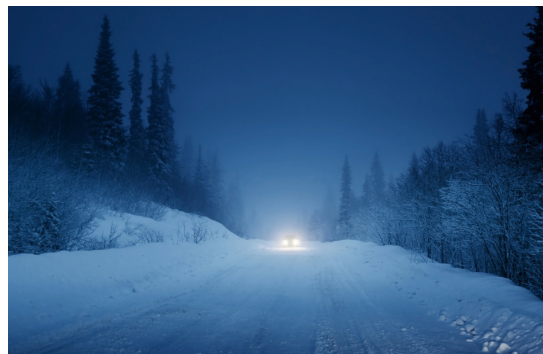
***"He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."*** ~ Ecclesiastes 3:11

## A Parent's Prayer

Dear Lord, I praise you for the dormancy of wintertime. May I use these days to reflect upon my many blessings, namely the incredible gift of my children.

Guide me Lord in being a positive role model for my children. In particular help me to model respectful relationships within the sport arena. Help me to encourage all the athletes on my child's team and the other team; remind me to be respectful of the officials; guide me in welcoming our opponents to the contest.

Lord, you are within me and within all around me. Give me the grace to be kind, loving and giving to all those in the athletic arena as I live and model justice for my child athlete. Amen.



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