

## **Coaching Formation**

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Due to cultural pressures, the coach has become an increasingly important person who is in a position to unleash the ideal of authentic Christian manhood or feminine genius. Considering recent statistics we gathered from a national study we have found that in most dioceses across the United States:

75-90% of students play sports

20-30% of students attend Mass on Sundays

5-10% of students participate in a youth ministry program

It is clear that sports is the primordial path to reach young people. In order to make this path as effective as possible, each diocese and each school or organization should consider establishing a systematic, intentional and strategic method and plan to form their coaches; so that they view their time with their players as ministry and an opportunity to evangelize.

Most dioceses have a full time director of youth ministry but very few have a full time director of sports as ministry. If a diocese has 50,000 youth, at least 37,500 will be playing sports. For every 10 athletes there is a coach. So a diocese might have 3,750 coaches.

Who is forming those coaches? Who is directing and inspiring the ministry that could be happening with them? In most dioceses, the answer is an unfortunate no one.

SportsLeader is a program that is focused on the formation of coaches and we want to help each diocese and each school find practical solutions to evangelize the world of Catholic athletics.

Creating a new position with the title of Director of Sports Ministry would enable dioceses to have a person directly in charge of the formation of coaches. The director's main responsibility would be to train and inspire the coaches, athletes and parents within the ministry of athletics.

Taking the first step of helping our coaches, parents and athletes to understand and appreciate the different virtues is a wonderful step to pre-evangelization.

The director could train coaches to manage their time with exquisite dedication so as to be able to mentor their athletes. We have seen marvelous transformations in so many lives through this concentrated effort of coaches spending quality time listening to their players. Trust is built up, which enables many avenues for encouraging habits, prayer and a drawing closer to God.

This mentoring takes on an even more essential role when our athletes come from broken homes where one or both of the parents are no longer in the lives of our young people. The coach can truly be a life-saver in these cases. This illustrates the necessity to intentionally form and train our coaches even more.

Ceremony, Catholic Identity and experiences flow very naturally from virtue and mentoring. Thus, bringing the sports team into more of a family than "just a sports team". The early Church grew through small communities where people loved one another, shared their passionate beliefs with one another ... A sports team is just that - "An early Church community where the seeds of faith can be planted and nourished with the coach as the apostle-leader."