

Intro

The Manager

There are many ways we can think about Jesus. One good way is that Christians are the 'players' on God's team and Jesus is the 'manager.' This session is a look at Jesus as manager through the lens of football (soccer). We'll think about the manager as being both manager and coach!

Luke 9.23-24

Then Jesus said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.'

Football Manager

Anyone ever played any Football Manager games? Or the FIFA games on Xbox or PS4? There's a Football Manager game for PC and Mac. Or maybe you've just played one of those Fantasy Football league games where you can pick a squad of players who get points throughout the season. The Premier League run a fantasy football league online and Sky Sports do an app.

The skill (if there is a skill, often it's more like good fortune!) is to pick the right players and to work out how you will play them / sell / buy others to get the highest points score.

The key thing is that you are the manager. The players don't tell you what they'll do – it's your decision to get the best out of them, play them at the right time in the right positions and change tactics when you need to. The goal is the same – winning. But you have to make the decisions – you're the boss.

In a similar kind of way, Jesus is the manager for all Christians. He knows the best 'tactics', where we should 'play' and helps us to become the best we can be. He always wants and needs us to play and be loyal to him. But he also knows when we need to switch positions or even have a rest if we burnout or get injured. He is the perfect manager.

The Manager - Pep Guardiola and Man City

In the 2017–2018 Premier League season, Man City had a record breaking season. Amazon did a documentary about them. Here is a promo clip from that documentary. (And no, I'm not a Man City fan!)

Direct Link – <https://youtu.be/S6ds0rLzk9Q>

One thing that players say about the manger is that he works them hard, develops them, demands high standards and gets the best out of them. He is also good at bringing younger players through. He's not afraid to say what he needs to say as he knows what is best.

This is a small picture of the way that Jesus is with us.

The Disciples First Eleven

[Download the images as a PDF here](#)

If you were putting together a first team with the disciples in, here's what it might look like...

Judas has been red carded and kicked off the team...



If you were putting together a 'first eleven' of people from the Bible, who'd make it onto the team?

You can have a think using the pic below...



Team Games

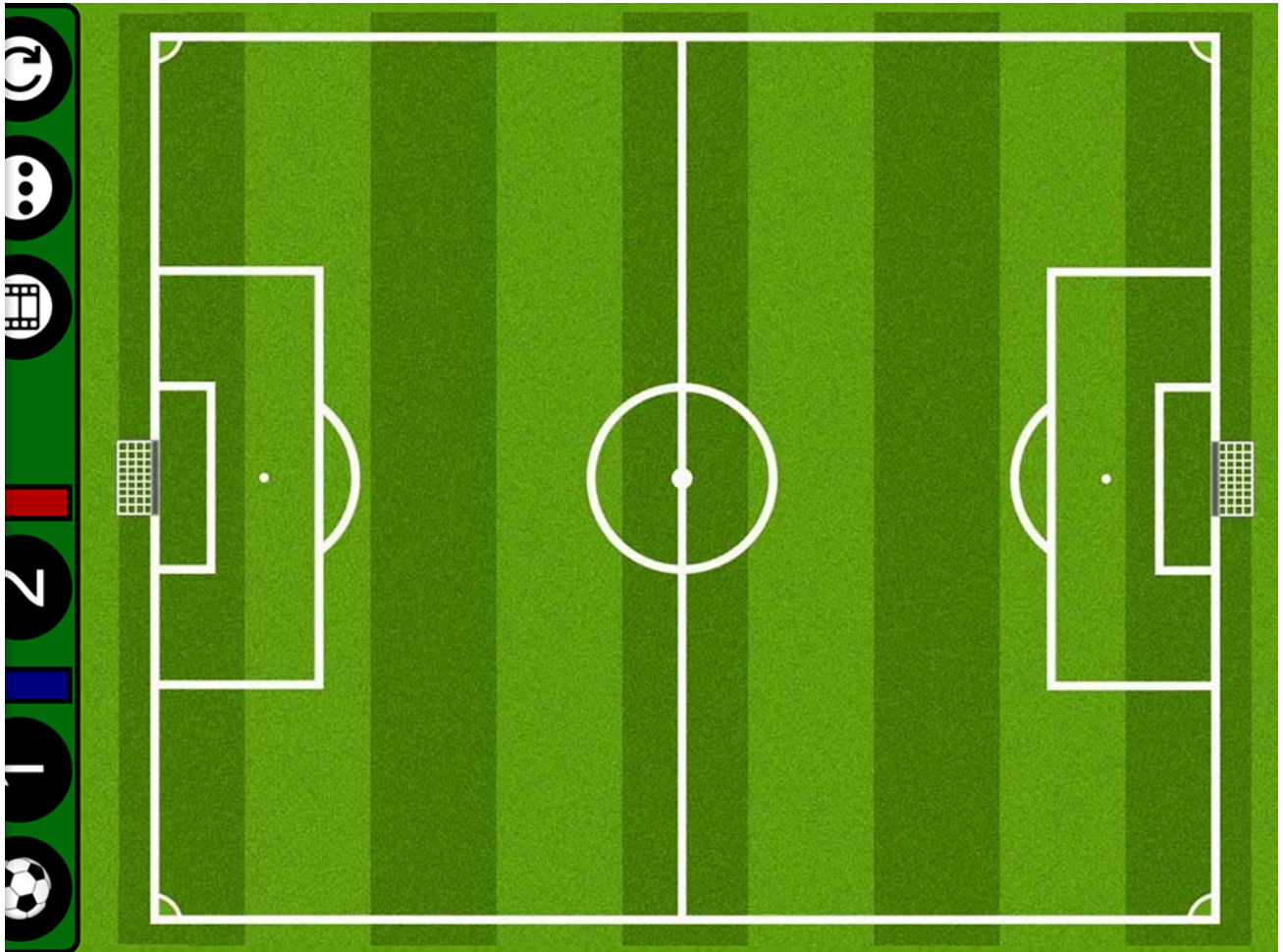
You could play some easy football coaching exercises with the group (with a football, or running exercises).

Some ideas are found at the FIFA Grassroots website – [click here for the link](#) – accessed March 2019.

Apps and Affirmations

You can also get various football / soccer coaching apps on iPad and Android if you feel like a bit of fun and displaying some tactics up on the screen...

(Like Football Board on Android or Soccer Tactic Board on iOS). You can name players on the app, so you can use people in your group!



Then go through your group and making positive football type affirmations of them...

"John you're great at being up front... about being a Christian"

"Katie you may need to drop back into defence... and support others who aren't as strong as you..."

The Team

The thing about the manager is that he wants a good team. The key word is team. When a football team go out on the pitch they have to work together. Sometimes it's a fight, sometimes it's easy. But they are a team and the team does what the manager says. There's no time for arrogance or members of the team doing their own thing or thinking they are bigger than the coach. That kind of attitude is wrong and a good manager will put players like that on the bench. The Bible tells us that at times God will discipline us because he loves us and wants the best for us.

Of course in football, the manager can buy and sell players or leave them out. Jesus doesn't get rid of us but he does sometimes give us time out. If we're not feeling fit or if life has injured us, he will sometimes give us a break so we can recover and get right. Other times the manager expects us to fight through the pain barrier. Jesus knows exactly what we need and what we can cope with so with him as manager we can't go wrong.

The Bible tells us that whoever wants to follow Jesus should count the cost and take up their cross every day. What does that mean? It means that it's not about us – it's about what the manager says and it's about the team (called 'the church'). When a player has the option of going to a football club, they have to consider lots of things. Often they think about money but they may think about who the coach is. When we follow Jesus there is a cost. There is a price that means we live for God and not for the same things that other people do like money, fame, sex, doing whatever they feel like.

The cross is described by one old Bible teacher (called Derek Prince) as the place where 'our wills and God's will meets.'

Taking up your cross (as the Bible says) is about doing God's will and not our will. People around us live life thinking they are in charge and that they are the centre of the world. But living for God is about doing what God says, knowing the truth that God is in charge and at the centre of the world.

Coaching Concepts

1. Are you part of the team? Have you said yes to Jesus in your life? Today is a good day.
2. Are there areas of your life where you've messed up? Say sorry to God and ask for his help.
3. Is there something that God is asking you to do? Decide to do it.
4. Is there anything you'd like God to do for you, in you, through you? Ask Him.