

**The Power of Virtue in Sports:
Why Athletics Are the Perfect Venue for Virtue Education**
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Definition of virtue:

From the Catechism (1803):

“A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.

The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.”

More general definition for the purposes of this session:

being in the habit of doing the right thing for the right reason

Are Sports *Really* a Great Place to Learn Virtue?

Six reasons why athletics are the perfect venue for virtue education:

1. Participants want to be there.
2. The desire for greatness is already present.
3. Practice, repetition, habit.
4. Time and relationships.
5. Virtue is a guardrail.
6. Sports are a universal language.

“This great event has significance not only for the world of sport as the expression of friendly athletic competition and the striving for human excellence but also for the future of the human community, which through sport gives external expression to the desire of all for universal cooperation and understanding.” – Pope John Paul II

“The potential of sports makes it a significant vehicle for the overall development of the person and a very useful element in building a more human society. A sense of brotherhood, generosity, honesty and respect for one's body - virtues that are undoubtedly essential for every good athlete - help to build a civil society where antagonism is replaced by healthy

competition, where meeting is preferred to conflict, and honest challenge to spiteful opposition. When understood in this way, sport is not an end, but a means; it can become a vehicle of civility and genuine recreation, encouraging people to put the best of themselves on the field and to avoid what might be dangerous or seriously harmful to themselves or to others.”

- Pope John Paul II

The Story of Sport- Virtue and the Moral Imagination

- Story is how God reveals Himself to us in Scripture. Jesus, the ultimate and complete revelation, told stories to help his disciples understand his teaching. Our brains are wired for story.
- Jason McElwain’s story.
- Sport, and stories about sport, can be used to show our athletes who they’re called to be, and inspire them to become that person.

How to Incorporate Virtue Education in Athletics Programs

- Five Ps:
 1. Prayer
 2. Preach (Teach)
 3. Practice
 4. Play
 5. Persevere