



SPIRITUAL TRAINING
in family life



GAMES & DISCIPLINE

PRESENTATION OF THE BODY & SOUL ITINERARY

On the occasion of this Olympic year, the Jesuits invite you to explore the spiritual dimension of playing sports and the relationship with the body, through the strains that are experienced in sports activities as well as in the spiritual life (strength & fragility, competition & team spirit...).

The “Body & Soul” itinerary offers spiritual training as a family experience. In each booklet, you will find a guided prayer, a time of sharing, a presentation by a Jesuit to explore the theme in greater depth, and testimonies from athletes. Each family is invited to come together for a time of listening, sharing, and praying.



1. GAMES & DISCIPLINE
2. BODY & SOUL
3. STRENGTH & FRAGILITY
4. HARDSHIP & STRUGGLE
5. DEFEAT & VICTORY
6. COMPETITION & TEAM SPIRIT

Let's begin with the first stage, “**Games and Discipline**”, ready to build momentum for this family time!

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FAMILY MEDITATION



MEDITATION BY SAINT-MARC HIGH SCHOOL

The Lycée Saint-Marc is located in Lyon. Founded in 1871 by Jesuit priests, it was first named Saint Joseph's school, and became the Lycée Saint Marc a century later, in 1971. 900 students are enrolled in the general lycée, the post-Baccalaureate preparatory classes and the micro lycée.

The school's history is shaped by a number of emblematic sites, starting with the chapel. The Sainte-Hélène theater, with its lively cultural center that organizes shows and concerts, is also a significant landmark. The foyer is also an essential venue. Students come here every day, and many activities are organized by the person in charge of student life, in collaboration with the student council. The labs are the starting point for the school's ecological transformation, which began some fifteen years ago. Other specific projects make everyday life at the school anything but ordinary! A commitment to solidarity with the *cura personalis* Solidarity Action Project and pastoral activities are just two examples.

LET'S BUILD MOMENTUM

Ready... Set... Go! Here's the start of the journey! Six steps for a spiritual training! Six weeks to run with God!

We'll have to train and show perseverance to make it all the way to the end. Let's face it, it won't always be easy, it won't always be pleasant. But it's worth it: we are running for the glory of God Himself! We've already set off. So let's not be afraid, and let the different themes guide us through the weeks, strengthening our relationship with the one who is our coach and our goal: God.

To begin our spiritual journey, let's set a framework to live it well: how much time will we dedicate each week to pray as a family? Will we also make time for personal prayer, even if it's just making a sign of the cross every day? What joy and light do we hope to gain from this race we've set ourselves on?

OPENING PRAYER

Putting ourselves in the presence of God

We come together in silence. We stand in a circle and take six long, deep breaths. We then take our places, comfortably settled for the duration of the prayer. **We mark ourselves with the sign of the cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Asking for grace

We ask for God's grace to follow him with lightness and trust.

MEDITATE WITH THE BIBLE

Introduction to the reading

Paul is writing to the Christians of Corinth (in Greece), whom he knows well, having lived and worked with them. However, when he wrote this letter, the Church in Corinth was in great difficulty.

Tensions were running high within the Church. Christians are not subject to any religious laws, believing that anyone can receive God's forgiveness and eternal life if they so desire. In the game of life, for Christians, there are no rules, because no one can be excluded. However,

some Christians take advantage of this freedom to do mischief. They say to themselves, "There are no rules, so let's do anything, as long as it pleases us." The result is that the Church is despised, torn apart and Christians are slaves to each other.

Paul tries to reconcile the community by emphasizing: there are no rules, but there is a spirit and a goal not to lose sight of: Christ. Playing the game of life with God therefore requires discipline to follow that spirit and reach that goal, a discipline that helps us become truly free.

The first letter of Paul to the Corinthians, (1 CO 9, 24-27)

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached the Gospel to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

A few ideas for reflection

> In the game of life, succeeding doesn't necessarily mean winning, but giving myself discipline can help me achieve my goals.

What goal have I already succeeded in achieving that gives me joy? I thank God for it.

> Sharing the joy of the Gospel is a collective game: taking the time to be generous, light-hearted and playful is very important!

My day may have been challenging, ordinary or boring, but do I remember taking some quality play time with someone else? Someone in the family? A friend from school? It could be a simple moment of friendship with someone dear to me! A time to confide in or listen to each other... I thank God for this moment and for the person with whom I shared it.

Personal meditation

Let's read St Paul's letter once more, paying attention to what makes the greatest impression on us.

INTERCESSION

We entrust to you, Lord, young people who are isolated and tempted to lose hope within their families, among their friends, and even in life itself.

OUR FATHER

To conclude this time of prayer, in the words of Jesus, let us say together :
Our Father, who art in heaven...

CONCLUSION

Lord, may your grace inspire our action and sustain it to the end, so that all our activities take their source in you and receive their completion from you.

We mark ourselves with the sign of the cross.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen



MOVING FORWARD WITH A JESUIT

“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever” (1 Co 9,25)



PRESENTATION

My name is Benjamin Keyichisilung and I am a Jesuit in training from the Kohima region of northeast India. I am a first-year philosophy student at the Loyola College in Paris. I live in the Saint Pierre Favre community on rue Blomet. I joined the Society of Jesus in 2016. A sociology scholar, I am now in Paris studying philosophy, for which I am very grateful. I have always been studying since I joined the Society of Jesus: a good example of consistency!

IN SHORT!

Life is like a game, and everything we do will determine the outcome. That said, not everyone has exactly the same cards to start with, nor the same chances of success. But the good news is that, with a little discipline, we can learn the rules of the game and have more fun playing it. What do you want: more luck or to be more determined?

In the mountains of northeast India, where I'm from, people like to play all kinds of outdoor sports. We are particularly keen on soccer, volleyball and basketball. It's a great way to spend time, because the game has many virtues. It's a way of building friendships, sharing joy, getting physical exercise, learning to respect rules and so on.

Playing together is an important part of our education. We spend a lot of time with friends, playing sports and hiking in the mountains. It allows us to develop physically. It teaches us to live together, as well as in the natural environment around us.

Thanks to the sports we play together, I can see a lot of talented young people in this part of the world. Yet I found it hard to understand how so much talent wasn't bringing more prosperity to the region. It worried me, and I wondered if the problem wasn't either a lack of self-discipline, or the means to continue nurturing all these talents. Surely, it's not enough to be talented; it also requires a great deal of discipline.

There's a saying that "discipline is the mother of success". I think it's important to stress this. Discipline demands regularity and aims for performance.

Regularity, on the one hand, is the ability to obtain the same result in series, while performance is the ability to have an excellent result, but without there necessarily being any regularity; it can be a one-off result. Regularity is a pure product of discipline, while performance is more the fruit of talent. To continue the comparison, consistency will always be harder to achieve than performance, because developing good consistency, especially at a high level, necessarily requires hard, continuous work. The Olympic motto reads: "Faster, higher, stronger, together". Achieving such a motto requires discipline and consistency.

In the world of sports, we can take Cristiano Ronaldo as an example. I'm amazed by this footballer, and in particular by the way he has been able to maintain such a high level of physical fitness all these years, despite being 39 years old. He himself says that talent is no longer enough. So what should one do? In fact, he leads a very disciplined life, with daily

exercise and a strict diet. This small example of a disciplined and serious athlete staying in shape for so long at the highest level should inspire us. After all, talent isn't given to everyone, unlike discipline, which puts everyone on an equal footing, whether they're naturally gifted or not, rich or poor. Of course, we won't all become like Cristiano, but we can all improve by adjusting our effort through healthy discipline.

When I read Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians, I'm struck by the comparison with athletes who impose rigorous discipline on themselves in order to win the prize. Paul specifies that he runs with his eyes fixed on the goal: what better definition of discipline? As Christians, of course, we can also bear in mind that we're not running to win a fading crown, but an eternal one.

Finally, discipline is also a spiritual virtue. Disciplined, simple and joyful living, recognizing the call of the Holy Spirit, is our true calling as Christians, as St. Paul tells the Ephesians: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ep 6,12). The invitation to be disciplined goes beyond our bodies and urges us to regain our inner self: the spiritual side of our lives.

Ultimately, playing is important to get started at the beginning and at any stage of life, as it's good to experience delight both physically and spiritually, but it's really the discipline that will decide what the game becomes.

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE



INTRODUCING THE WITNESSES

Pierre-Alexandre and Paul-Emmanuel are 18-year-old twin brothers. They live in Saint-Denis, in the La Plaine neighborhood. Alongside their studies in high school, they play soccer with the Paris 13 Atletico club: they train three times a week, and play a league game on Sundays. They will do their utmost to continue in this path, but are also considering studying journalism to become sports reporters.

TESTIMONY

“*Pierre, Paul, you are soccer players. Soccer is about passion and energy, but it’s also about respecting the rules: how do you manage that?*”

— *Soccer’s important to me, because it lets me forget about life’s problems, and when I’m on the field, I don’t think about anything else: all I want to do is have fun and **give it my all**. Playing soccer, being with others, scoring... it gives me a unique feeling.*

— *Soccer lets me get away from everything that’s going on outside: at school, I’m always sitting on a chair. It’s the sport I’ve loved the most since I was a kid, and it lets me get away from it all and have fun with my teammates.*

— *But the coach gives us **rules and positions to respect**. You have to **be disciplined** on the pitch: even if you see that your opponent is going to tease you or try to cheat, you can’t get involved in his game, you always have to stay focused, because there are rules to respect.*

— *As we’re competitors, it can happen to anyone to go a bit over the limit, to trick a bit, to have that little teasing look. It’s sport, it’s soccer, and it’s also about the feelings it brings. But above all, you have to think about the team.*

— *It’s thinking about others that gives you a sense of the rules, because first and foremost we’re a team. It’s not something personal, it’s first and foremost a team that comes ahead of me.*

ANOTHER SMALL STEP



FAMILY TIME TOGETHER

Let's sit down together and take a few minutes to think about someone we have known since childhood who is very gifted in a particular sport or artistic skill.

Then let's look at how that person came to be so good at what he or she does.

> Is there something remarkable about his personality? Let's take two important elements in his or her way of working, write them down and ask ourselves how this can inspire us in our lives.

AND NOW ...



Congratulations!

With Games and Discipline, we've reached the end of this first step on our spiritual journey! Great start!

Let's keep up the momentum and move on to our second stage: **Body & Soul!**



This itinerary is put together by the **Family Ministry of the French speaking Jesuit Province of Western Europe (EOF)** in partnership with Prie en Chemin, 4 Jesuit schools (Saint-Louis de Gonzague, Sainte-Marie La Grand'Grange, Provence, Saint-Marc), a Christian Brothers school (La Salle-Saint Denis), the church of Saint-Paul de la Plaine and the diocese of Saint-Denis.

The Family Ministry, EOF Province brings together many initiatives offered by Jesuits for families: summer vacation sessions, weekends and online retreats, simple and creative proposals "to be experienced at home"... All in a joyful spirit united in Christ!



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