

Got Fruit? Peace

Ready (*Plant the seed*)

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. —Philippians 4:6-7

Set (*Get the conversation started*)

In Mark Chapter 4, Jesus is asleep in a boat with his disciples during a terrible storm. The wind was ferocious and waves were crashing over the boat. The disciples were terrified and woke Jesus who stood and said, "Quiet! Be still!" Suddenly everything became calm and Jesus said to the disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

The gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside you once you accept Jesus comes with the fruit of peace. In John 14, Jesus comforts his disciples as he prepares to leave them saying, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Being an athlete can be stressful sometimes. You may be at the end of a tied game when you receive the ball and are dribbling or running down the field to score. In those seconds, the whole game rests on your shoulders. Will you score and win? Will you miss and face defeat and possibly the disappointment of your teammates? That is a lot of pressure! What about when you are injured and have to sit on the sidelines and watch your team continue on without you? That can be frustrating! What if it's a bad injury and you worry that you won't be able to play again?

There are times where you will feel anxious in your sport. In John 16:33, Jesus tells his disciples, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Through Jesus, you may have peace in the storms of life, in those moments of anxiousness. He says this over and over throughout scripture. God will not take away your struggles, but he will give you the strength to overcome them and the peace of knowing He is in control. When you are giving your best out there on the field, do it for Him- your audience of one. When you silence the crowd and the other players and know that you aren't playing for them, but for Him, you realize that to win or to lose is no matter in His eyes. He loves you all the same. This is the peace of the Lord. The love of God is all the peace you need to weather any storm.

Grow (*Take it away*)

-Have you experienced a time you felt anxious as an athlete and it didn't turn out so well?

-What could you have done differently?

-How can you practice having the peace of God within you so that when you find yourself needing it, you'll know how to calm the storm?

Pray

Father God, we are so glad you are in control. It brings us such peace knowing you are always with us and we won't weather any storms alone. We're sorry that we sometimes try to control everything ourselves and worry how it will turn out not remembering that you do everything for our good. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for helping us to grow and learn. In Jesus name, Amen.

Overtime (*Optional interaction to reinforce lesson as time allows.*) No set up or items needed.

-Have players rub hands together palm to palm.

-Ask them to name things that they worry or stress about; things that make them feel anxious or out of control.

-Let this go on until you suddenly say "freeze."

-What you say: *Look at your hands. What does it look like you are doing right now? (Praying) Anytime you feel worried or troubled about something, you can always stop and talk to God. Tell Him what you need. Pray about everything.*

-Reread Philippians 4:6