



# Baseball Coaches Packet

## Table of Contents

Letter from Pastor Ethan _____	2
Program Overview _____	3
Coach To-Do List _____	4
Weekly Lesson Plans _____	5

Hey Coaches!

I want to start off by saying thank you for partnering with us. Naz Rec has been serving the community for over 40 years and you are a part of this history. Having been a coach myself, I know how challenging it can be, but also how rewarding this opportunity is.

Nazarene Recreation is truly an incredible community. We have the joy of using sports and activities to help each other grow in a variety of ways, all while encouraging each other in these moments together. We take pride in the fact that Naz Rec is a safe place where anyone is welcome.

As I've watched, and even found myself coaching too, I've been so impressed by your willingness to lead. So many parents and coaches step up in various ways to make your own respective sports go well by combining coachable moments with fun. It is my job, with the help of our staff, to make this enjoyable for you as well.

We've provided you a packet with some tools we think may be helpful for you throughout the course of this session. Feel free to use them as a guideline to help make your practice time and development go as smoothly as possible. If at any point you have any questions, please reach out to us and we would be happy to assist you.

At the end of each session, every participant receives a trophy. Naz Rec has an incredible history of some of the best awards ceremonies I have seen. Over the last year, as Covid has placed some limitations on allowing larger group gatherings, distribution of those trophies changed as we worked to provide safer alternatives. We are working on a fun and safe opportunity to bring these back, but will be monitoring our current situation while following local and church board guidelines.

I am excited for you to join us for this session. The part you play in Naz Rec, is a vital role. Every moment you have leading these individuals makes a huge difference in so many ways. So once again, thank you for giving up your time to help others and continue the positive experience so many people have had while participating with us here at Nazarene Recreation.

Sincerely,

Pastor Ethan

# Nazarene Recreation at a Glance

## History

Nazarene Recreation has been serving the Southwest Suburbs for over 40 years. Originally started before any other sports programs in the area, Naz Rec continues to be a leader in youth sports today. Naz Rec offers programming for kids of all ages, specializing in sports leagues and classes for 3-10 year olds. If you want to play sports in a family-friendly environment where the focus is on developing your player, not just on winning, Naz Rec is the place to be.

## Vision

Nazarene Recreation exists to offer recreational programming that develops athletes to be healthy and active for life. We want to partner with parents to help them raise up healthy, active, fully developed children.

## Session Goals

As a coach, there are only a few goals that we have for you this session, but they are very important ones! As a coach, please focus on each of these goals:

- Every player improves
- Every player has fun
- Every player, parent, coach, and team feels safe and comfortable
- You have fun

## What to Expect

Each week you will have one hour to both practice and to play a game. All the games are non-competitive; we don't keep scores and the emphasis is on having fun, not winning. Please plan on practicing for the first 15-25 minutes each week. The remaining time is set aside for playing the game. When you arrive, all the equipment you need will already be set out for you. If you need additional materials, like cones or spot markers, just let us know ahead of time via email. You will share the court/field with the team you are playing against that week for your practice.

## The Nazarene Recreation Method

At Naz Rec, we embrace the Long Term Athlete Development (LATD) model of sports programming. LATD combines Sports Science with Developmental Psychology and applies that to sports programming. The goal is for every player to be engaged in age-appropriate activities that help develop the entire body into a young athlete.

One way we apply this theory at Naz Rec is by having multiple sports sessions each year. It is far better for the health and development of your player for them to play multiple sports throughout the year up until about 12 years of age than it is for them to get really good at just one sport early on. If you specialize in one sport too soon, you run the risk of your player getting burned out and also of your player overdeveloping the muscles associated with that activity while underdeveloping all of the supporting muscles and movements that aren't directly involved. Basically, you run a greater risk of injury later on if your child specializes in one sport too early in life. That's why we have short sessions that mix up the sports: We want each child to be able to play multiple sports throughout the year!

## For Your Safety

The safety of our participants and coaches is of utmost importance to us. Volunteers serve as representatives of Nazarene Recreation, and we ask that you follow the following established rules to ensure your safety and the safety of our participants.

**Never be alone with a child.** Our programs are structured to ensure group participation and do not allow for one-on-one instruction or seclusion.

**Do not host a team party as an extension of the recreation session.** We do not support activities outside of our scheduled, approved programs and events.

**Never use physical touch to correct or instruct a player.** We provide whistles to grab the attention of the player and require instruction be through demonstration.

# Coach To-do List

## Before the Session Begins:

- Attend Coach's Meeting
- Send an email to your team introducing yourself
- Organize snack list
  - Please be mindful of allergies! Ask parents if there are any food allergies on your team

## First Day of the Session:

- Arrive at least 15 minutes early!
- When you arrive, please pick up your team's shirts, picture information, updated roster, and schedules from the Rec Office
- Players will come to you to get their t-shirts. Introduce yourself to all your players and their parents
- Please announce the weather policy to all parents (found on parent brochure)
- The first practice is reserved as a practice only day; you are not required to play a game if your team isn't ready for one. For sports like T-ball, there's a lot more teaching involved. Sports like Soccer, however, most kids will get right away and will be ready to play. The decision to play a game is up to you and the coach you are scheduled against: if both teams are ready to play, go for it!

## Each Week:

- Review your lesson plan in advance
- Communicate any additional needs or concerns with our League Staff
- Make any important announcements: Picture Day, Awards Ceremony coming up, etc.
- Run the drills for that week at the start of practice. Feel free to add your own drills or adjust the drills to better suit your team's needs. Practice lasts 15-25 minutes
- Play a game against another team. Coach: You become the referee/game manager at this point. Rotate your subs in often, encourage your players to keep playing, give lots of high fives, and shout out instructions when needed
- Have fun!

## Picture Day:

- Picture day is marked on your schedule
- Additional picture forms can be found in the Rec Office if someone needs one
- On picture day, please do your normal routine
- The photographers will come and get your team when they are ready for you. They will take you to get photos, and then return you to your court
- Then, just pick up where you left off!

## End of the Session:

- Make verbal announcements and send email reminders about the Awards Ceremony
- Encourage as many players as possible to attend the Award Ceremony
- Attend the Award Ceremony with your team

# Practice Lesson Plans

## Weekly Warmups:

Each week you should begin with a warmup. I recommend always doing something different for warm-ups. This will keep things interesting for your players and also add a great deal of fun. A good warm-up is simple: Get the kids moving, active, and energized at the start of your practice. Feel free to bring your own warm-up ideas if you want! Variety from week to week makes this a highlight for your players! Here is a list of suggested warm-ups you can choose from:

- ★ Jogging Laps

- ★ Jogging a lap is a great starter for any sport. It gets the kids moving and warms up their bodies quickly. I recommend jogging with them if you can!

- ★ Line drills

- ★ Make use of the colored lines on the gym floor! Have kids line up on one color, and then run to the next color line. Mix it up by having them sprint, then have them hop on two feet, then hop on one foot, then go backwards, etc. Have them go from one line to the next and then stop. This teaches full body control and also works on balance and stability.

- ★ Dynamic Stretches

- ★ Dynamic Stretches are stretches that involve moving. Static stretches are actually something you want to avoid... which means try not to line your kids up in a line and have them do 10 stretches in a row without moving. Static stretching actually does very little to aid flexibility. Dynamic stretches are much better for loosening players up. Dynamic stretches are things like running with "High Knees" or with "Kick Butts". Other examples are standing jumps (jump 10 times in a row or do 10 jumping jacks, etc), leg swings/kicks, arm circles, walking toe touch (keep your legs straight!), and walking lunges.

- ★ Follow-the-Leader

- ★ Follow-the-Leader type games help develop players in a variety of ways. Plus, it helps teach your players to listen and to follow your directions. Consider adding in change of direction (zig-zag), fun motions (fly like a plane), plyometrics (hop on one foot or take big jumps), and change of speed (sprint a little then slow way up then sprint again). This is a very fun game to play and will also get your kids loose and ready to play your sport!

- ★ Tag Games

- ★ Tag type games are really good for teaching body control and general movement. Tag gets kids running in multiple directions and also watching the "it" person, which helps them develop awareness of their surroundings.

# Practice Lesson Plans

## Week 1:

1. Line sprints
  1. The key here is to go FAST! Make a game of it by telling them to run when you say “go!”... and then try to trick them. :) Have them sprint from one side of the field to the other. Mix it up by sprinting to specific places or lines.
2. Throwing Basics
  1. There are a couple of important fundamentals that we want to teach all of our players when throwing a ball. I recommend teaching these step by step. Have players all line up in front of you, and then demonstrate (have them copy you) the correct throwing form one step at a time. Begin this WITHOUT any balls! The key here is teaching the form/movement first:
    1. Start by holding the ball in your throwing hand but pressed against the palm of your glove, with both hands in front of your chest. (Should look like praying hands almost, except with a glove and ball.)
    2. Bring the throwing hand back. The ball should be by your ear. Your elbow should be up high, above your shoulder.
    3. Step with the opposite leg toward your target
    4. Point with your glove hand at your target
    5. Twist your torso (chest for the kids :) as you throw the ball. Make sure that kids follow through! Their throwing hand should end up by their waist on the opposite side of their body (a right hand throw should end by the waist on the left hand side of the body).
3. Fielding Grounders
  1. This will be your most popular drill in Baseball. Try and get some parents to help you! The more balls you can get rolling at the same time, the better. Have kids line up in front of you. Roll them a ball along the ground. Have them catch the ball in their glove, and then throw it back to you. Key here is to make sure the glove touches the ground, but faces up... we don't want the kids to trap the ball against the ground but rather to scoop it up with their glove.
4. Base Running Basics
  1. This drill is for teaching the base running rules. Teach the kids where each base is, the correct order for running them, and when to run and when to stop. Make this a fun game by playing “Simon Says” (Simon Says run to first base! Simon says stop! etc).

# Practice Lesson Plans

## Week 2:

1. Throwing Basics part 1 (NO BALLS)
  1. There are a couple of important fundamentals that we want to teach all of our players when throwing a ball. I recommend teaching these step by step. Have players all line up in front of you, and then demonstrate (have them copy you) the correct throwing form one step at a time. Begin this WITHOUT any balls! The key here is teaching the form/movement first:
    1. Start by holding the ball in your throwing hand but pressed against the palm of your glove, with both hands in front of your chest. (Should look like praying hands almost, except with a glove and ball.)
    2. Bring the throwing hand back. The ball should be by your ear. Your elbow should be up high, above your shoulder.
    3. Step with the opposite leg toward your target
    4. Point with your glove hand at your target
    5. Twist your torso (chest for the kids :) as you throw the ball. Make sure that kids follow through! Their throwing hand should end up by their waist on the opposite side of their body (a right hand throw should end by the waist on the left hand side of the body).
2. Throwing Basics part 2 (WITH BALLS)
  1. Have the players use the correct throwing form you just taught and throw the ball into the field. After they throw the ball, have them chase it and come back to throw it again. As they throw, walk around and give coaching tips on the form.
3. Batting Basics
  1. SAFETY RULES: Every player that is batting must have a batting helmet. Every base runner will also have a batting helmet. Make sure that all players waiting to bat are kept well out of reach of the batter. Keep a tight eye on where the bats are at all times!
  2. Teach the basics for batting. The key fundamentals that we want to teach at the Baseball level are the stance, eye contact, and the swing.
    1. Stance: Make sure kids stand with feet shoulder-width apart, perpendicular to the plate. Use the floor line markers from Pastor Ethan to show where they should put their feet.
    2. Eye contact: Make sure the kids are watching the ball the entire time they are swinging... kids have a tendency to look everywhere all at once. We want them to stare at the ball all the way through the swing.
    3. Swing: We want a "level" or "flat" swing.. not a "scooping" swing. The key to this is keep the back elbow up and away from the body for the swing.
  3. Have each kid hit 3-5 balls in a row for practice, then pull in the next hitter.
4. Fielding Basics
  1. While your team is taking batting practice, have the remainder of your team in the field practicing their fielding. After each hit, have them throw the ball to the coach or a parent. AVOID DOG-PILES!!! :)

# Practice Lesson Plans

## Week 3:

1. Catching Basics
  1. Catching the ball is about hand-eye coordination... and not being afraid of the ball. :) Try to get several parents to help you in this drill... the more balls being thrown, the better! Have the kids line up in front of you. Get down on one knee (this is crucial to help alleviate their fear!). Have them hold out their glove in front of them, with it open to the sky. Toss the ball into their glove. Teach them to watch the ball with their eyes the entire time. Go right down the line throwing the ball into each player's glove and then repeat.
2. Fielding Grounders
  1. This will be your most popular drill in Baseball. Try and get some parents to help you! The more balls you can get rolling at the same time, the better. Have kids line up in front of you. Roll them a ball along the ground. Have them catch the ball in their glove, and then throw it back to you. Key here is to make sure the glove touches the ground, but faces up... we don't want the kids to trap the ball against the ground but rather to scoop it up with their glove.
3. Fielding Positions
  1. Teach the kids what each position is called. Make it game by seeing who can remember the positions! Teach them that each player only gets the ball when it is in their area/close to them (we want to avoid dog-piles on the ball!).
4. Batting Basics
  1. SAFETY RULES: Every player that is batting must have a batting helmet. Every base runner will also have a batting helmet. Make sure that all players waiting to bat are kept well out of reach of the batter. Keep a tight eye on where the bats are at all times!
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    3. Swing: We want a "level" or "flat" swing.. not a "scooping" swing. The key to this is keep the back elbow up and away from the body for the swing.
  3. Have each kid hit 3-5 balls in a row for practice, then pull in the next hitter.
5. Fielding Basics
  1. While your team is taking batting practice, have the remainder of your team in the field practicing their fielding. After each hit, have them throw the ball to the coach or a parent. AVOID DOG-PILES!!! :)



# Practice Lesson Plans

## Week 4:

1. Throwing Basics part 1 (NO BALLS)
  1. I recommend teaching these step by step. Have players all line up in front of you, and then demonstrate (have them copy you) the correct throwing form one step at a time. The key here is teaching the form/movement first:
    1. Start by holding the ball in your throwing hand but pressed against the palm of your glove, with both hands in front of your chest. (Should look like praying hands almost, except with a glove and ball.)
    2. Bring the throwing hand back. The ball should be by your ear. Your elbow should be up high, above your shoulder.
    3. Step with the opposite leg toward your target
    4. Point with your glove hand at your target
    5. Twist your torso (chest for the kids :) as you throw the ball. Make sure that kids follow through! Their throwing hand should end up by their waist on the opposite side of their body (a right hand throw should end by the waist on the left hand side of the body).
2. Throwing Basics part 2 (WITH BALLS)
  1. Have the players use the correct throwing form you just taught and throw the ball into the field. After they throw the ball, have them chase it and come back to throw it again. As they throw, walk around and give coaching tips on the form.
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    2. Eye contact: Make sure the kids are watching the ball the entire time they are swinging... kids have a tendency to look everywhere all at once. We want them to stare at the ball all the way through the swing.
    3. Swing: We want a "level" or "flat" swing.. not a "scooping" swing. The key to this is keep the back elbow up and away from the body for the swing.
  3. Have each kid hit 3-5 balls in a row for practice, then pull in the next hitter.
5. Fielding Basics
  1. While your team is taking batting practice, have the remainder of your team in the field practicing their fielding. After each hit, have them throw the ball to the coach or a parent. AVOID DOG-PILES!!! :)

# Practice Lesson Plans

## Week 5:

1. Catching Basics
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2. Fielding Grounders
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  3. Have each kid hit 3-5 balls in a row for practice, then pull in the next hitter.
5. Fielding Basics
  1. While your team is taking batting practice, have the remainder of your team in the field practicing their fielding. After each hit, have them throw the ball to the coach or a parent. AVOID DOG-PILES!!! :)

# Practice Lesson Plans

## Week 6:

1. Play Catch
  1. This is a combination of the catching and throwing basics we have been working on. This is a huge goal for all Baseball players!! Start with the players in partners standing relatively close together. As they get more confident, have them space out more. You can make this a game by seeing who can throw the farthest (after each successful catch, the players take a step back).
2. Fielding Grounders
  1. This will be your most popular drill in Baseball. Try and get some parents to help you! The more balls you can get rolling at the same time, the better. Have kids line up in front of you. Roll them a ball along the ground. Have them catch the ball in their glove, and then throw it back to you. Key here is to make sure the glove touches the ground, but faces up... we don't want the kids to trap the ball against the ground but rather to scoop it up with their glove.
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# Practice Lesson Plans

## Week 7:

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3. Passing Telephone game (Passing relay game)
  1. This is just like the game "Telephone", but instead of whispering in someone's ear, you are trying to pass the ball. You can set your players up in any shape you want: Straight line, circle, square, zig-zags, etc. Try out different shapes to make this more fun and/or challenging. You can either race against the clock (see if your players can beat their previous best time), or have two teams race each other. The idea is simple: The ball starts at one side of the line. The ball must be passed from one player to the next until it reaches the other end of the line.
4. Batting Basics
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# Practice Lesson Plans

## Week 8:

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# Practice Lesson Plans

## Tips and Tricks: Including All Athletes

NazRec embraces each and every athlete, and strives to meet each one where they are. As a coach, you can help foster a positive experience for each athlete you encounter. Some of our athletes join us with different challenges and come with different experiences. To help create a positive environment, here are some things to remember:

- **Embrace the opportunity:** as a coach, you set the tone. Being inclusive and increasing diversity will help everyone benefit and gain new experiences. Focus on all the positives your athletes bring to your team!
- **Treat every athlete as an athlete:** Focus on the person, not the challenge. ● Provide opportunities for athletes to be leaders (as appropriate): For older athletes, provide them opportunities to lead drills or a warm up. Rotating leaders can help those wanting to have an opportunity.
- **Set similar, but reasonable expectations:** All athletes want to be treated the same, especially as they get older. We want our athletes to improve each week, so setting reasonable expectations for all athletes will help everyone feel included.
- **Foster Independence:** While it may take longer for some of our athletes, they can work to be independent and complete the same tasks as others (ie: pick up equipment, get their snacks, etc.)

### Tips for Helping All Athletes:

1. Athletes do well with clear expectations for each practice.
  - a. The expectation is that we are making safe choices and everyone is included.
  - b. When an expectation isn't met, you can refer back to it. The "Remember, we want to make safe choices. Remember, we want to include everyone"
2. Try setting "goals" for the practice
  - a. Examples: Everyone participates, everyone tries to score once

### For the athlete who is:

#### *Unfocused*

- Keep them active and keep them moving!
- Gentle redirections, and reminders the importance of staying focused (ie: prevents injury)
- Switch activities / drills often. If there is a "lull" in the activity, have them do something in place (run in place, jumping jacks, etc.)
- Provide them a specific "job" (ie: they count how many kicks it took to score a goal, they count the number of athletes remaining)

# Practice Lesson Plans

## *Impulsive*

- Set clear expectations for the start of practice and refer back to expectations (ie: making safe choices, everyone participates, we stay on the court, etc.)
- Gentle redirections and reminders (ie: prevents injury, keeps people safe, keeps the game fair)
- Switch activities / drills often. If there is a “lull” in the activity, have them do something in place (run in place, jumping jacks, etc.)

## *Shy / Nervous*

- Deliberately pair them up with more outgoing kids, or those who are naturally welcoming.
- Understand that they may be comfortable watching or participating from the side, but try to work towards getting them more involved as the season goes on.
- Don't assume they don't want to participate or they are fine being alone. They may need a personal invitation to join in.
- Praise their good work and participation, no matter how small!

## *Physical Impairment*

- Modify activities as needed,
- Adjust expectations (running half court, versus full) or give them additional space if needed (put them on the end)
- You set the tone as a coach, and your athletes will follow your lead. Treat them as you would any other athlete.

## *Defiance*

- Set clear expectations for the start of practice and refer back to expectations (ie: making safe choices, everyone participates, we stay on the court, etc.)
- Gentle redirections and reminders (ie: prevents injury, keeps people safe, keeps the game fair, everyone should participate)
- Provide them a specific “job” (ie: they count how many kicks it took to score a goal, they count the number of athletes remaining)
- Praise their good work and participation, no matter how small!