

September 30, 2011



News From The Common Ground

“Whatever a person is like, I try to find a common ground, so that he will let me tell him about Christ.” 1 Corinthians 9:22 NLT

BRINGING THE GOSPEL TO THE BALLPARK

Since May, 1999, one of the roles I have had the opportunity to fill is “River City Rascals Chaplain.” The Rascals play in the Frontier League, one of the professional independent minor league baseball leagues spread throughout the country. You might be saying, “I’ve heard that pro sports teams, primarily baseball, have chaplains. What exactly do they do?”

In baseball, because of the players “work schedules”, most players are unable to attend church during the season. So the main function of the chaplain is on Sundays to “bring the gospel to the ballpark” via chapel services conducted for both teams by the home team’s chaplain. Each of these chapel services lasts about 15 minutes and usually done an hour and a half to two hours before the game. In many cases, the chaplain also goes to the umpires’ dressing room and has prayer with them.

In addition to this, the team chaplain has other ways he is to minister to the spiritual needs of the team. The main one is to organize and lead Bible Studies for players who are already Christians who want to go deeper in their faith. These usually take place at least twice a month. Sometimes out of chapel services and Bible Studies come opportunities to meet one-on-one with players who have specific questions, concerns, problems, prayer requests, etc. they don’t want to share in front of the team.

Depending on the team and the relationship you have with the manager and the front office, God opens other opportunities of ministry. For instance, the current manager of the Rascals, Steve Brook, was one of the prominent pitchers for the Rascals from 2004-2007. Steve is a very committed Christian and during the 2006 season started conducting pre-game prayers on the road in the dugout. When they came home off that road trip, Steve told me about this and asked if I would lead these before every home game and away game that I am able to attend. I was more than glad to do so and that is something that has carried on ever since then. (Pictured is the prayer time before our playoff game on September 8, 2011. Sometimes individual players ask me to have a prayer with them before a game. Pictured is my prayer with Stephen Holdren on that same night. I had the opportunity to disciple him during this past off season. As a result, he asked me to have a prayer with him before each game as well.)



For a guy who grew up playing sports, especially baseball and basketball, but not good enough to play professionally, being a chaplain for a pro baseball team is a great outlet God has given me to fulfill two of my greatest passions; first of all my passion for Christ and second of all my passion for sports. I challenge you to take your passion for Christ and allow God to open up a ministry opportunity in an area that you dearly love!

Randy Curless, Program Coordinator

“ Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

**“We will not hide them (commandments) from their children: we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.”
Psalm 78:4**

What an Amazing Experience

This summer proved to be one of the most exciting and fulfilling experiences of my life. God provided me with the opportunity to help children improve their athletic skills without losing focus on their relationship with Christ.

It was such an amazing experience to watch these young children ask Jesus to be their life champion. It is amazing

what God will do when you stop worrying about what to say and let Him lead. I am so thankful for the encouragement and support from my family, friends, and other staff members.

Abby Eagleburger



Reaching Children In Your Community



This summer was our first summer at First Baptist St. Charles to use Sports Crusaders in our summer activities. I was very excited to have a program that teaches the word through sports. We did a multi sport camp using soccer and cheerleading as our sports. We also paired the sports camp with Vacation Bible school and made it an all day program. I was so impressed with the Sports Cru-

sader staff, the way they handled the students, and the way they taught the kids not only in their small groups but by example. Not only did we have children except Christ as their Lord and Savior, we also had some of those families start coming to church. I was so impressed by the whole program and would recommend this program to churches looking for a new way to

reach children in their community.

Melanie Richardson,
Children's Director
First Baptist Church
St. Charles, MO



SPORTS CRUSADERS LIVE



Gallop Polls tell us that 90% of Americans play, watch, read about, or listen to sports at least once a month; 75% once a week. About 5 ½ years ago, Sports Crusaders was approached by a radio station in St Louis, AM 630, KJSL, about the possibility of having a Christian sports-talk radio show on their airwaves. For many years I've wanted to host a sports talk radio show, but the opportunity never presented itself, but now it had. So on

May 21, 2006, "Sports Crusaders Live" had its inaugural show. For the past 5+ years, "Sports Crusaders Live" has aired on that station every Sunday night from 8:00-9:00pm central time. In addition to airing on AM 630, KJSL in the greater St Louis area, the show is streamed on our website, which is linked up to the station. As a result, we have had listeners as far north and west as Vancouver, Canada; as far south and west as Phoenix, AZ;

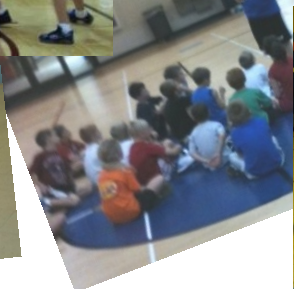
as far south and east as Dothan, AL; and lots of places in between. In addition to all of this, most of the shows that have had interviews are available on podcast through our website. You can listen to it at that time on your computer or you can download it to your MP3 player or thumb drive and listen to it later.

Randy Curless,
Program Coordinator

AM 630, KJSL in Greater St. Louis area every Sunday 8-9pm or on line at www.sportscrusaders.org

2011 Camps

Sports Crusaders held 60 camps this summer with 2,283 kids in attendance and 243 of those kids made Professions of Faith! God is so Good!!



Big Dog Homework—Who is a champion that you look up to? (These are some of the answers given by kids this summer)

- My Step-Dad, Brian- he's a fireman, and he is proud of his job. If you need him for anything, ask him, he's your helping hand.
- Mia Hamm-I look up to Mia Hamm because she was born with a club foot and she had to wear corrective shoes. She overcame it and became a famous soccer player.
- Momma-She loves me, my sis and bro and puts a roof over my head and puts clothes on my body. And she survived cancer too.



SPORTS CRUSADERS
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Living Role Models

I have worked with troubled youth in residential treatment facilities for 6 years now. A lot of these youth have been physically, sexually, and/or psychologically abused, neglected or abandoned. Some have gotten in trouble with the law. Some battle addictions. Most have never had a positive role model in their lives. We strive to help them with their issues by teaching them to take ownership, build positive relationships, and believe in themselves. They are all amazing young men and women who just need someone who genuinely cares about them.

Every year I have worked in residential treatment I have always wanted to get the kids involved with Sports Crusaders. I know firsthand how effective Sport Crusaders camps are because I spent the summer of 2004 as a Sports Crusader. I knew it would be a great opportunity not only for the kids to learn about sports and interact with positive role models, but more importantly, for the kids to learn about Christ and see what true unconditional love is really about. All these kids are searching for that "something" to fill the void in their lives. I know nothing will ever fill that void but the love of Jesus Christ.

Sports Crusaders camp first came to Meramec Adven-

ture Learning Ranch in 2010 and the kids loved it. The younger kids viewed the Crusaders in a "hero" sense because they are collegiate athletes and also because of the passion and joy they saw in them. The older kids viewed them as role models and something to aspire to for the same reasons.

I believe this summer was just as successful as 2010. The kids and staff had nothing but good things to say about RJ and Dione and their basketball camp. The kids shared with everyone they saw what they had learned and how much fun they had. They shared with me how they had made personal commitments to make themselves better young men and how they had been reading their Bibles every day. And of course, they are already asking when the Crusaders are coming back.

We are very grateful for the amazing job the Crusaders did this summer and for all the lives they touched. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you next summer!

Jeremy Odneal,
Lead Guide
Meramec Adventure Learning Ranch
Boys & Girls Town of Missouri