



## MISSION CUP PLAYBOOK

*Where the Gospel Meets the Goal*

*This playbook is designed by U.S. Missions to assist Assemblies of God districts, networks, and churches creatively engage communities through the excitement of the World Cup.*



## Missions Cup Playbook: Where the Gospel Meets the Goal

This playbook is designed to help Assemblies of God districts, networks, and churches creatively engage their communities through the Missions Cup, drawing inspiration from the excitement and energy of the World Cup. The focus is on evangelism, community building, and outreach, all centered around the theme: **"Where the Gospel Meets the Goal."**

### 1. Pre-Event Lead-Up (Week of the Missions Cup)

- **Theme Promotion:** Use sermon series, church bulletins, and social media to introduce the theme **"Where the Gospel Meets the Goal"**. Emphasize the parallels between a soccer goal and the ultimate goal of life: salvation through Jesus Christ.
  - **Sermon Ideas:**
    - *"The Goal of the Gospel"*: Exploring how God's mission to save humanity is like a team working toward the ultimate goal.
    - *"Running the Race"*: Drawing parallels between sports training and spiritual preparation (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
    - *"Goalkeeper of Your Faith"*: Discussing how we protect and guard our faith in Christ, using the role of a goalkeeper as an analogy.
- **Prayer Focus:** Dedicate time to pray for the nations participating in the World Cup. Pray for spiritual revival, for the church to boldly proclaim the gospel, and for sports to open doors to new opportunities for evangelism.
- **Community Engagement:** Create banners, flyers, and posters with the Missions Cup theme for display in local businesses, parks, and schools. Incorporate QR codes that link to a gospel presentation or a special invite to the event.
- **Mission Cup Logo and other items available for download from the Mission Cup website.**

### 2. Watch Party Events (During the Missions Cup)

- **Watch Party Venues:** Host watch parties at the church or in community centers. Encourage community members to invite friends and family, especially those who are not regular church attendees.
  - **Pre-Game Events:** Start with music, prayer, and a short message. Share a testimony of someone who has come to faith through outreach or sports ministry.
  - **Game Highlights and Devotionals:** Share short devotionals at halftime, drawing parallels between the team's strategy, determination, and the importance of living a life focused on Christ.
    - Example: *"In every match, there's a strategy for success. In our lives, God has a plan for victory through Jesus Christ. How can we play our part?"*



- **Interactive Activities:**
  - **Soccer Trivia:** Incorporate fun soccer trivia with a gospel twist. For example, ask questions about famous soccer players and connect it to the idea of being a "team" in Christ's mission.
  - **Goal Wall:** Set up a "Goal Wall" where people can write down prayer requests or goals they have for their personal walk with Christ or their community.
- **Food and Fellowship:** Serve snacks and international foods from the countries playing in the World Cup. Use this as a conversation starter to share about the missions work in the United States, as well as, what is happening in those countries.

### 3. Missions Cup Tournament (Church Tournament or Local Outreach)

- **Community Tournaments:** Host a church or local community soccer tournament leading up to the Missions Cup. Form teams with a mix of church members and people from the local community.
  - **Opening Ceremony:** Kick off with a prayer and a brief message about how sports can be a bridge to sharing the gospel. Emphasize teamwork, unity, and the mission of Christ.
  - **Tournament Focus:** Use the tournament to share the gospel. Each team can wear shirts that promote the theme *"Where the Gospel Meets the Goal."*
  - **Evangelistic Outreach:** Use the tournament as an opportunity to invite people to hear the gospel, especially if they've never been to church. Consider inviting a guest speaker or evangelist to give a gospel message at the tournament's conclusion.
- **Church Teams vs. Community Teams:** Create teams made up of both church members and unchurched individuals. This creates a natural bridge to relationships and conversations about faith and outreach.

### 4. Service Projects (Community Engagement During the Week)

- **Serve Day:** Organize a community service day during the Missions Cup week, such as a clean-up, a food drive, or a school supply giveaway. Give out flyers about the Missions Cup event and invite people to attend.
  - **Prayers for the Nation:** Partner with U.S. Missions, and have each team represent a different city. Pray for those cities and their need for the gospel. Each team can share brief insights into the challenges and needs of the city they represent.

### 5. Missions Cup Sunday (Final Service Day)



- **Sermon Title:** *"Scoring Goals for God's Kingdom"* – Challenge the congregation to view their lives as a game where they are actively pursuing the ultimate goal of evangelism and discipleship.
  - **Service Focus:** Challenge people to reflect on the importance of teamwork, community, and outreach. Just as every player is crucial to a team's success, every believer is crucial to the mission of spreading the gospel.
- **Testimonies & Video:** Showcase testimonies from people whose lives have been impacted through the Missions Cup outreach events or sports ministry. Also, share a video that creatively parallels soccer with the mission of the church.
- **Call to Action:** Challenge the congregation to get involved in missions, whether it's through prayer, giving, or going. Ask people to commit to an area of service (local or global) and encourage them to share their "goals" with the church.

## 6. Follow-Up and Outreach Post-Event

- **Post-Event Communication:** Send follow-up emails or text messages thanking attendees for their participation and reminding them of the gospel message shared. Include links to upcoming church events, small group opportunities, or mission trips.
- **Volunteer Mobilization:** Encourage attendees to get involved in ongoing outreach or mission's teams. Share opportunities for involvement in local sports ministries, food drives, or international mission efforts.

## 7. Engaging Children and Youth

- **Children's Ministry:** Host a "Mini World Cup" tournament for children, where they can participate in smaller soccer games and hear gospel-centered messages on teamwork and God's plan for them.
  - Provide materials that tie into the theme, such as activity sheets with soccer illustrations and Bible verses.
- **Youth Ministry:** Engage youth in sports outreach by hosting a "Missions Cup Youth Night," combining soccer and evangelism. Include testimonies, worship, and a message focused on God's calling to serve others.

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### Bonus Ideas:

- **Social Media Challenges:** Create a "Goal for the Gospel" challenge on social media, encouraging people to post about their participation in the Missions Cup events, sharing the gospel with friends, or serving others. Offer prizes for the most creative posts.



- **Missionary Spotlights:** During the week leading up to the Missions Cup, spotlight missionaries working in soccer-loving countries and share their work through video or stories in the church. This can connect the global aspect of soccer with the need for the gospel.

## Final Thoughts:

In everything from the soccer field to the watch party, this Missions Cup Playbook provides churches with the opportunity to creatively share the gospel and engage the community in a memorable way. By connecting the excitement of sports with the mission of Jesus, your church can invite people to experience **"Where the Gospel Meets the Goal."**

Here are several ways to invite people to the Missions Cup events, ensuring the message reaches both your church members and the wider community:

### 1. Personal Invitations

- **Encourage Congregation to Invite Friends:** Empower church members to personally invite their friends, family, and coworkers. Provide them with "invite cards" or digital invitations they can easily share. These cards can include the event details, the theme *"Where the Gospel Meets the Goal"*, and a brief explanation of the gospel message being shared at the event.
- **Text and Email Invitations:** Encourage church members to text or email their friends with a personalized invitation to the event. You can provide a simple template for them to use.
  - *Example Text:* "Hey! Our church is hosting a Missions Cup event with soccer, food, and a powerful message about Jesus. I'd love for you to join me this [date] at [time] at [location]. Would you be interested in coming?"

### 2. Social Media Outreach

- **Event Pages:** Create Facebook events or other social media event pages and encourage everyone to RSVP and share the event with their networks. Use the event to keep people engaged with updates, countdowns, and reminders as the date approaches.
  - **Shareable Graphics:** Design eye-catching graphics for Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter with details of the event, including the theme *"Where the Gospel Meets the Goal"*. Include clear calls-to-action like "Invite a Friend," "Join Us," or "Come for the Game, Stay for the Gospel."
- **Social Media Challenges:** Launch a social media challenge inviting people to post why they love soccer or sports and how it relates to their faith, using a



unique hashtag like #GoalForTheGospel. Encourage participants to invite others to the event by tagging them.

- **Influencer Partnerships:** Work with local influencers, athletes, or people in the community who have a strong social media presence to help spread the word. Provide them with event details and let them share their excitement about the event on their platforms.

### 3. Flyers and Posters

- **Street and Business Outreach:** Place eye-catching flyers and posters in local coffee shops, libraries, schools, gyms, and restaurants where people gather. These can feature the event details and invite the public to participate in the Missions Cup and watch parties.
- **Door-to-Door Invites:** Have church members walk through local neighborhoods to invite people directly. Pass out flyers with a brief explanation of the Missions Cup and the theme. This is a great way to connect with those who may not be reached through digital means.

### 4. Community Partnerships

- **Local Businesses:** Partner with local businesses to promote the event. Ask local coffee shops, restaurants, and retail stores to display flyers or posters. Consider offering a small incentive, such as discounts for people who show they're attending the Missions Cup event.
- **Schools & Universities:** Work with local schools, colleges, and universities to spread the word to students. Use email newsletters, posters on bulletin boards, and announcements at school events. If possible, set up a booth at school sporting events or after-school activities to personally invite students to the Missions Cup.
- **Community Centers and Clubs:** Reach out to community centers, sports clubs, and recreational leagues to offer event invitations. Many community organizations are looking for opportunities for social engagement, and the Missions Cup can be a great way to invite new people to experience the church.

### 5. Church Involvement

- **Pastoral Invites:** Have your pastors personally invite people during Sunday services or through video messages. Include the invitation in sermon closing statements, encouraging the congregation to bring friends to the event.
- **Volunteer Teams:** Mobilize volunteers to reach out to their circles of influence. Provide them with the tools (flyers, digital invites, social media templates) to spread the word.
- **Small Groups/Ministries:** Have small groups, youth ministries, and other church groups actively invite their friends. Offer group challenges or incentives for



bringing guests. For example, the group that brings the most visitors could win a prize.

## 6. Publicity and Media

- **Local News or Radio:** Consider getting the word out through local radio stations, community newspapers, or even local news websites. You can either promote the event through a public service announcement (PSA) or work with the media outlet to feature a brief story about how the Missions Cup is using sports to share the gospel.
- **Church Website and App:** Ensure the Missions Cup event is listed prominently on your church's website and app. Include an easy way for people to RSVP, invite others, and share the event on their own social media platforms.

## 7. Text Message Campaigns

- **SMS Invitation Service:** Set up an automated text message service that can send reminders and invitations. Use this to send out event details a few days before the Missions Cup begins, with a link to RSVP.
- **Personalized Reminders:** A few days before the event, send out reminder texts to everyone who has RSVP'd, encouraging them to invite a friend. Example text: "Just a reminder that the Missions Cup is this Saturday! Can't wait to see you. Bring a friend and join us for soccer, food, and an inspiring message!"

## 8. Incentives and Giveaways

- **Free Entry with Invitation:** Offer free entry to the event or a special incentive (like free food or raffle tickets) for those who bring a friend or share the event on their social media.
- **Raffles and Prizes:** Advertise a raffle with prizes such as sports tickets, soccer gear, or gift cards. The more people you invite, the higher their chances of winning!

## 9. Interactive Invitations

- **Invitation Videos:** Create a short, exciting video trailer for the Missions Cup event that's easily shareable. Make it visually engaging with clips of soccer games, testimonies, and details about the gospel message that will be shared. Invite people to share it with their friends as a way of personally inviting others.
- **Event Countdown:** Use a countdown timer on your church's social media and website, building anticipation for the event. Each day, share a new reason to attend, from soccer action to the gospel message.



## Sample Invitations:

- **Invite Card (Physical and Digital):** "Join us for the Missions Cup! Soccer, Fun, and the Gospel – Where the Gospel Meets the Goal! Invite your friends and family to watch the game, enjoy food, and hear how the ultimate goal in life is found in Jesus. [Event Date] at [Event Location]."
- **Social Media Post Example:** "🏆 The Missions Cup is here! Watch the game, enjoy great food, and hear the life-changing message of the gospel! It's all happening this [date] at [location]. Invite your friends and family for a day of soccer, community, and faith. #GoalForTheGospel #MissionsCup"







# **MISSION CUP ONE-DAY TOURNAMENT & EVENT PLANNING TEMPLATE**

*Where the Gospel Meets the Goal*



## **Mission Cup: Where the Gospel Meets the Goal**

### *One-Day Outreach Tournament Schedule & Event Planning Template*

#### **Event Overview:**

The Mission Cup is a one-day community soccer tournament designed to engage people of all ages and backgrounds through the universal language of sport. The event will combine friendly competition with opportunities for gospel outreach, fun activities, and community engagement. The goal is to keep attendees active, involved, and present throughout the day, while offering moments for witnessing and connection with local churches and ministries.

#### **Tournament Schedule:**

- **8:00 AM – 9:00 AM: Check-In & Registration**
  - Registration desk where participants and spectators check in.
  - Free event T-shirts or wristbands for those who register early.
  - Opportunity for church and ministry booths to set up and display information.
- **9:00 AM – 9:15 AM: Opening Ceremony & Welcome**
  - Welcome message from local district leaders and pastors.
  - Brief explanation of the day's schedule.
  - Prayer for the event and participants.
  - Explanation of the outreach focus: "Where the Gospel Meets the Goal."
- **9:15 AM – 11:30 AM: Round 1 of Matches**
  - Teams play 20-30 minute matches. Use a round-robin format to ensure everyone plays multiple games.
  - Teams are mixed from different districts to encourage community interaction.
- **11:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Witnessing & Break Time**
  - During a break between matches, have testimony speakers share their stories of faith.
  - Interactive booths with gospel tracks, Bibles, and ministry pamphlets.
  - A mini "half-time show" featuring worship music or a brief gospel message.
- **12:30 PM – 2:30 PM: Round 2 of Matches**
  - Continue with games, keeping the energy high with quick, friendly competition.



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- Announcer to keep energy up, sharing scripture verses or prayers between games.
- **2:30 PM – 3:30 PM: Food, Fellowship, & Outreach Activities**
  - Food trucks or community food booths featuring local church vendors (hot dogs, BBQ, tacos, etc.).
  - Provide free water and snacks to keep the community engaged.
  - “Fun Zone” for kids with games, face painting, inflatable bounce houses, etc.
  - Local church teams can host booths to share information about their ministries and how to get involved.
- **3:30 PM – 4:30 PM: Final Matches & Tournament Completion**
  - Semi-finals and finals of the tournament.
  - Engage the crowd with upbeat music, cheering, and announcements.
- **4:30 PM – 5:00 PM: Award Ceremony & Closing**
  - Trophy presentation for the winning team and acknowledgements for participants.
  - Closing gospel message and invitation for prayer or connection with local churches.
  - Group prayer to wrap up the day and encourage participants to stay connected to their faith journey.

## Fun Ideas to Keep People Engaged:

- **Mini-Games & Contests:**
  - A penalty shootout contest during breaks, with prizes for winners.
  - “Goal of the Day” challenge, with voting from the crowd on the best goal scored in the tournament.
  - A “Juggling Challenge” to see who can keep the soccer ball in the air the longest.
- **Social Media Engagement:**
  - Set up a photo booth with props and a hashtag (#MissionCup) for people to share their photos on social media.
  - Encourage participants to share photos with the event’s hashtag to spread the word and invite friends.
- **Interactive Prayer Wall:**
  - Set up a prayer wall where people can write prayer requests and also pray for others in return.
  - Encourage church members to pray with attendees on-site.



## Ways to Keep People There All Day:

- **Loyalty Cards:**
  - Provide loyalty cards that attendees can get stamped at various booths and activities throughout the day for a chance to win a prize at the end.
- **Engage through Games and Competitions:**
  - Rotate other interactive sports and games, such as a 3-on-3 basketball game or a volleyball set-up.
- **Family-Friendly Atmosphere:**
  - Offer kid-friendly entertainment (bouncy houses, face painting) to draw families in and keep them at the event.

## Food Options:

- **Food Trucks/Local Vendors:**
  - Offer diverse food choices: tacos, burgers, pizza, BBQ, and vegetarian options.
  - Snacks such as popcorn, ice cream, and fruit.
- **Drink Stations:**
  - Hydration stations with water and sports drinks for players.
  - Coffee and cold beverages for the spectators.
- **Donation-Based Food Stand:**
  - Offer food for a donation, with proceeds going to missions or community outreach programs.

## How to Let People Know About the Event:

- **Social Media Campaign:**
  - Promote through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter with posts about the tournament and its gospel outreach mission.
  - Use event pages to encourage community sign-ups.
  - Include testimonials and past event highlights to generate excitement.
- **Church Announcements & Flyers:**
  - Encourage local churches to announce the event from the pulpit and share it on church social media.
  - Distribute flyers in local neighborhoods and coffee shops.
- **Local Press and Radio:**
  - Reach out to local radio stations, community news outlets, and church bulletins to promote the event.
- **Email Newsletter:**



- Send invitations to church members, district leaders, and community partners through email with a direct call to action to attend and register.

## **Tournament Options for Age Groups:**

To ensure the tournament is accessible to a wide range of participants, we will divide teams based on age groups and skill levels. This allows for fair competition and maximizes engagement across all ages.

- **Under 12 (Youth Division):**
  - Teams of 5-7 players.
  - Smaller field sizes for easier play and a focus on fun and development.
  - 15-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime.
- **13-17 (Teen Division):**
  - Teams of 6-8 players.
  - Standard-size field for competitive play.
  - 20-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime.
- **18+ (Adult Division):**
  - Teams of 7-9 players.
  - Full-size field for more competitive matches.
  - 25-minute halves with a 10-minute halftime.
- **Co-ed Division (Family/Community Friendly):**
  - Teams of 5-7 players, with a minimum number of female players on the field (to encourage inclusivity).
  - Mixed age groups, ensuring a fun, family-friendly atmosphere.
  - 15-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime.

## **Prayer on the Field:**

We believe in the power of prayer and its importance in setting the tone for the day's activities. Integrating prayer into the event offers a spiritual foundation for the entire tournament.

- **Pre-Game Prayer:**
  - Before each match, a brief prayer can be said on the field by team captains, with coaches or pastors leading. This can focus on unity, sportsmanship, safety, and the opportunity to witness the love of Christ through sport.
- **Mid-Game Prayer (Optional):**



- Halfway through the game, teams can come together for a brief moment of prayer, thanking God for the opportunity to play and asking for continued safety and sportsmanship throughout the game.
- **Post-Game Prayer:**
  - After each match, teams can come together for a brief prayer of gratitude and reflection, highlighting the values of friendship, community, and teamwork in Christ.

## Honoring Sportsmanship:

A key value of the Mission Cup is maintaining a spirit of Christlike sportsmanship. To encourage this, we will highlight teams and individuals who exemplify these traits throughout the event.

- **Sportsmanship Awards:**
  - At the end of the event, awards will be given to teams and individuals who demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship. Criteria for awards include teamwork, respect for opponents, encouragement of others, and adherence to the tournament rules.
- **Recognition of Coaches and Volunteers:**
  - Special recognition will be given to coaches and volunteers who go above and beyond to support their teams in a Christlike manner, helping to create an inclusive and respectful environment.
- **Prayer and Dedication:**
  - The event can close with a special moment of honoring the spirit of the tournament—honoring not just the winners, but the unity, sportsmanship, and joy of playing in community.

## Rules for Sportsmanship:

To ensure a respectful and positive experience for everyone involved, the following rules will govern all tournament play:

1. **Respect:**
  - Players, coaches, and spectators must treat each other with respect. Disrespectful behavior, including foul language or taunting, will not be tolerated.
2. **No Conflict Rule:**



- Players, coaches, and fans are expected to handle all disagreements with respect. There will be no tolerance for physical altercations, unsportsmanlike conduct, or aggressive behavior on or off the field.
  - In case of a conflict, the following protocol will be followed:
    - **Step 1:** The referee will stop the game and address the situation with a warning.
    - **Step 2:** If the conflict persists, the offending player or coach will be removed from the game for a cooling-off period.
    - **Step 3:** For serious or repeated incidents, the individual may be disqualified from the tournament, and the team will forfeit the match.
- 3. Encouragement and Team Spirit:**
- Players should encourage their teammates and opponents. The focus is on teamwork and uplifting others, creating an environment where everyone is celebrated for their effort, regardless of the outcome.
- 4. Fair Play:**
- The integrity of the game must be maintained. Teams and players are expected to play fairly and abide by the spirit of the game. Cheating, foul play, and intentional rule violations will result in penalties or disqualification.
- 5. Sportsmanship Pledge:**
- At the start of the tournament, each team will recite a sportsmanship pledge, committing to play with respect, honor the rules, and keep the focus on the gospel message of love and community.

## **Tournament Format with Sportsmanship Focus:**

- **Round Robin (Early Rounds):**
  - Each team will play against multiple teams, allowing for a balanced and fair competition. Teams will rotate through various matchups to ensure everyone gets plenty of playtime and opportunities to demonstrate good sportsmanship.
- **Elimination (Finals):**

The top teams from each division will proceed to a knockout-style final round. The elimination rounds will be based on win/loss records, but a key focus will be on maintaining the highest levels of sportsmanship and respect, especially in competitive final matches.

