ONSIDE SOCCER

ONSIDE PLUS

THE PLAYBOOK

Football, faith and real life

8 SESSIONS
FOR PLAYERS AGED 9–16

BELONGING · CONFIDENCE
CHARACTER · PURPOSE

WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

OUR VALUES

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER
Football brings us together. Friendships keep us together.

EVERYONE BELONGS
Whoever you are and wherever you're from, there's a place for you.

KINDNESS COUNTS
How we treat each other matters more than the scoreline.

CHARACTER MATTERS
Who you're becoming counts as much as how you play.

SERVICE BEFORE STATUS
We look out for others before we look out for ourselves.

DEVELOPMENT IS A JOURNEY
Nobody's finished. We all keep growing, a bit at a time.

FAITH INFORMS OUR PERSPECTIVE
Our Christian faith shapes how we see people, and you're welcome whatever you believe.

Everyone is welcome. Faith is optional. Questions are encouraged. Respect is expected.

Onside uses football to help young people build friendships, grow in confidence and discover purpose. You don't need to be a Christian to take part, and anything faith-based is always your choice.

ONSIDE SOCCER

ONSIDE PLUS

THE PLAYBOOK

Football, faith and real life

"Be strong and courageous. Don't be afraid. Don't be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

JOSHUA 1:9

THIS PLAYBOOK BELONGS TO...

MY NAME

MY AGE

MY TEAM / GROUP

MY FAVOURITE PLAYER

MY BEST POSITION

HOW IT WORKS

There are eight sessions. Each one follows the same four steps as the Onside Faith website:

1. **DISCOVER**
   A moment from football, a story from the Bible and the big idea.
2. **THINK**
   A memory verse and some honest questions to think about.
3. **TRY**
   An activity to fill in and a challenge to try during the week.
4. **CONNECT**
   A talk or topic to explore next on Onside Faith, and someone to talk it through with.

Everyone is welcome. Faith is optional. Questions are encouraged. Respect is expected.

There are no wrong answers and nobody's marking this. Use it on your own, with your family or with your group. Look out for **Level up** questions if you're 13 or over and fancy something harder.

WELCOME

HI, AND WELCOME TO THE TEAM

When I started Onside, it was because I loved football and I'd seen what it could do for young people. A game with your mates can give you friendships, a team to be part of and adults who believe in you. I've always thought football could help you grow as a person as well as a player.

At Onside we see it as one journey. Football gives us a place to meet, play and build relationships. Mentoring gives you space to think about who you're becoming. And Onside Faith offers a way to explore Christianity and the bigger questions of life, if you want to.

This Playbook goes alongside the Onside Faith website. Each session starts with something that happens on the pitch, connects it to a story from the Bible and follows the same four steps as the website: Discover, Think, Try and Connect.

You don't need to be a Christian to use it. Everyone is welcome, faith is optional and questions are encouraged. If you want to talk anything through, our chaplain and all our leaders are always happy to listen.

Take your time with it. Some sessions will feel easy and some will make you think. That's fine, because nobody's finished growing, me included.

I really hope it helps you see how much you matter, and how much you've got to give.

Paul

Paul Harbinson
Founder and CEO, Onside

ONE ONSIDE JOURNEY

FOOTBALL IS JUST THE START

Football gives us a place to meet, play and build relationships. Those friendships help you belong, and belonging grows your confidence. Confidence opens up opportunities, and along the way you find your purpose: the good you've got to give. The sessions follow that journey.

FOOTBALL › RELATIONSHIPS › BELONGING › CONFIDENCE › OPPORTUNITY › PURPOSE

THE SESSIONS

01	There's a place for you	BELONGING	6
02	Better together	BELONGING	9
03	Made on purpose	CONFIDENCE	12
04	Bouncing back	CONFIDENCE	15
05	When no one's watching	CHARACTER	18
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BEFORE YOU START

PRE-MATCH CHECK

Be honest. Circle a number for each one. Nobody else needs to see this.

1 = not really · **3** = sometimes · **5** = definitely

I feel like I belong at Onside.	1 2 3 4 5
I've got people I can talk to when things are hard.	1 2 3 4 5
I believe in myself.	1 2 3 4 5
When I make a mistake, I can bounce back.	1 2 3 4 5
I do the right thing even when nobody's watching.	1 2 3 4 5
I'm kind to people, even ones who aren't my mates.	1 2 3 4 5
I think I've got something good to give.	1 2 3 4 5
I help other people without being asked.	1 2 3 4 5

ONE THING I'D LOVE TO GET BETTER AT, ON OR OFF THE PITCH

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BEGIN?

Tick the one closest to where you are today. It won't label you or stop you exploring anything.

- ☐ **I'M CURIOUS** · I'm not sure what I believe and want to understand what Christianity is about.
- ☐ **I'M EXPLORING** · I want to learn more about Jesus, prayer, the Bible and Christian faith.
- ☐ **I WANT TO GROW** · I already have faith and want help putting it into practice.

Keep your answers. You'll do this again at the end and see how far you've come.

SESSION 1 BELONGING

01

THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU

Ever stood there while teams were being picked, hoping your name gets called? Most of us have. It's one of the worst feelings in football, and it isn't really about football at all. It's about wondering whether you belong.

1 DISCOVER

JESUS PICKS LEVI

LUKE 5:27–32

Levi was a tax collector, and in his town that made him about as popular as a referee who's just given a penalty against the home side. People thought he was a cheat, and some of them were probably right. Nobody wanted him on their team.

Then Jesus walked past Levi's tax booth and said two words: "Follow me." Levi got up, left everything and went. He threw a huge party, invited all his friends, and Jesus came along. Some religious leaders grumbled about the people Jesus was hanging around with, but Jesus told them these were exactly the people he'd come for.

Jesus picked Levi before Levi had sorted himself out.

> **THE BIG IDEA**
>
> **You don't have to earn your place. At Onside everyone belongs, and the Bible says God's love works that way too.**

2 THINK

MEMORY VERSE

"See how great a love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God!"

1 JOHN 3:1

☐ I can say it without looking

1. When have you felt like you really belonged somewhere? What made it feel that way?

2. Why do you think Jesus picked someone nobody else wanted?

3. Who might be feeling left out at training or school at the moment?

LEVEL UP · 13+

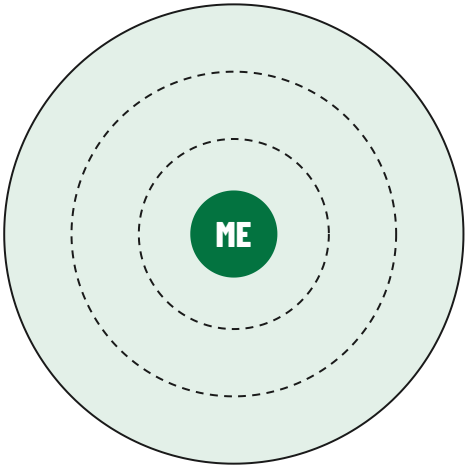
Is there a difference between fitting in and belonging? Which one matters more to you, and why?

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER

3 TRY

MY PEOPLE

Write your name in the middle. In the rings around you, write the people who make you feel like you belong: family, friends, coaches, teammates. The closer they are to you, the nearer the middle they go.



THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

BE A PICKER

This week, look out for someone who's on their own, at training, in the playground or online, and bring them in. Invite them into a game, sit with them, or just say hello.

What happened?

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PRAY

God, thank you that I don't have to earn my place with you. Help me notice people who feel left out. Amen.

4 · CONNECT

Do you have to fit in to belong?

Football & Faith talk on onsidefaith.co.uk. Or talk it through with your coach or the Onside chaplain.

SESSION 2 BELONGING

02

BETTER TOGETHER

Nobody wins a match on their own. Even the best striker in the world needs a keeper behind them, defenders to win the ball back and a midfielder to thread the pass. Life works a lot like that.

1 DISCOVER

FOUR FRIENDS AND A HOLE IN THE ROOF

MARK 2:1–12

A man who couldn't walk had four friends who were sure Jesus could help him. When they reached the house where Jesus was teaching, it was packed. There was no way in.

So they climbed up onto the flat roof, dug a hole right through it and lowered their friend down on his mat, landing him right in front of Jesus. Jesus saw how much faith they had, and he healed the man. He picked up his mat and walked out in front of everyone.

He could never have got there on his own. His friends carried him.

> **THE BIG IDEA**
>
> **We're made for teams. Sometimes you're the one being carried, and sometimes you're the one doing the carrying.**

2 THINK

MEMORY VERSE

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow."

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10

☐ I can say it without looking

1. Who's someone who has helped carry you when things were hard?

2. Why do you think people sometimes find it hard to ask for help?

3. What could you do for a teammate who's having a tough time?

LEVEL UP · 13+

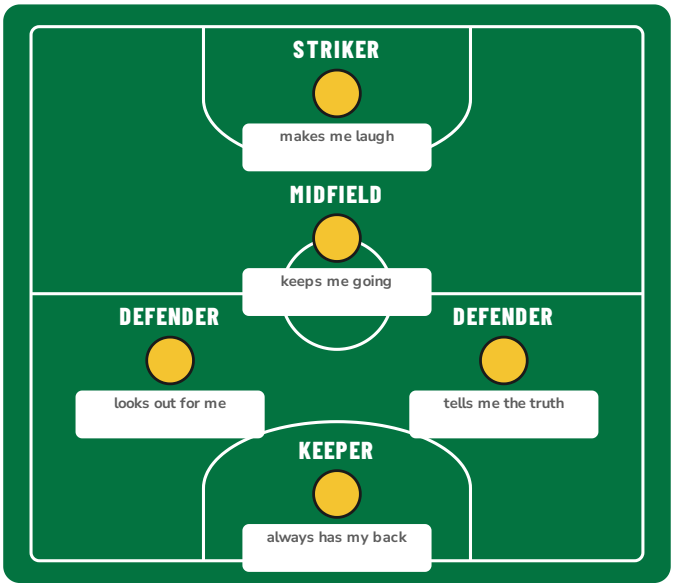
The four friends did something a bit mad: they broke a roof! When is it worth taking a risk for a friend?

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER

3 TRY

MY FIVE-A-SIDE

Pick your team from the people in your life. Write a name in each position.



THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

BE ONE OF THE FOUR

Choose one person this week and help carry something for them, whether that's their kit bag, a worry or just a bad day.

What happened?

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PRAY

God, thank you for the people who carry me. Show me who needs a friend this week. Amen.

4 · CONNECT

Who's actually got your back?

Real Life on onsidefaith.co.uk. Or talk it through with your coach or the Onside chaplain.

SESSION 3 CONFIDENCE

03

MADE ON PURPOSE

It's easy to spend all your time comparing. Their boots are better, their skills are better, their follower count's bigger. Comparing is a game you can never win, because there's always someone who looks like they're ahead.

1 DISCOVER

THE ONE NOBODY BROUGHT IN

1 SAMUEL 16:1–13

God sent the prophet Samuel to Jesse's house to choose the next king of Israel. Jesse lined up his sons, and the eldest looked the part: tall, strong and impressive. But God told Samuel, "man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Seven sons walked past, and God said no to every one of them. Samuel asked if that was everyone. There was one more: the youngest, David, who was out in the fields looking after the sheep. Nobody had even bothered to bring him in.

He was the one God had chosen.

> **THE BIG IDEA**
>
> **Your worth isn't about your skills, your looks or your stats. You were made on purpose, and God sees the whole of you.**

2 THINK

MEMORY VERSE

"I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful."

PSALM 139:14

☐ I can say it without looking

1. What do people usually notice first about you? What do you wish they'd notice?

2. How do you think David felt being left out with the sheep?

3. When does comparing yourself to other people get you down?

LEVEL UP · 13+

Social media shows people's highlights, not their whole game. How does that change the way we see ourselves?

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER

3 TRY

MY PLAYER CARD

Forget pace and shooting. Fill in the stats that really count, then colour in the bars.

NAME **POSITION**

KINDNESS										
COURAGE										
TEAMWORK										
EFFORT										
HUMOUR										

THREE THINGS I'M GOOD AT

SPECIAL ABILITY (something kind I do)

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

STOP COMPARING, START NOTICING

Each day this week, write down one thing you did well, however small.

MON **TUE**

WED **THU**

FRI **SAT**

SUN

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PRAY

God, thank you for making me me. Help me see myself the way you see me. Amen.

4 · CONNECT

Who are you when nobody's cheering?

Big Questions on onsidefaith.co.uk. Or talk it through with your coach or the Onside chaplain.

SESSION 4 CONFIDENCE

04

BOUNCING BACK

Every player who's ever taken a penalty has missed one. What matters is what you do next: hide from the ball, or ask for it again.

1 DISCOVER

BREAKFAST BY THE LAKE

JOHN 18 AND JOHN 21

Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends. He once promised he'd never let Jesus down, whatever happened. Hours later, when Jesus was arrested, Peter was so scared that he told three different people he didn't even know him. He'd failed in the biggest moment of his life, and he knew it.

After Jesus came back to life, he found Peter by a lake and cooked him breakfast on a fire. Then he asked him three times whether he loved him, once for each time Peter had let him down. Every time Peter said yes, Jesus gave him a job to do.

Peter went on to become one of the great leaders of the early church.

> **THE BIG IDEA**
>
> **Failing doesn't make you a failure. With God, a mistake is never the end of the story.**

2 THINK

MEMORY VERSE

“A righteous man falls seven times, and rises up again.”

PROVERBS 24:16

☐ I can say it without looking

1. Think of a mistake you’ve made on the pitch. How did you react?

2. Why do you think Jesus asked Peter the same question three times?

3. What helps you get back up after a bad day?

LEVEL UP · 13+

Is there something you need to put right with someone, or something you need to forgive yourself for?

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER

3 TRY

MY RESET ROUTINE

Top players have a routine to reset after a mistake. Build yours, then practise switching the script in your head.

1 · BREATHE
How will you calm down?

2 · SAY
What will you tell yourself?

3 · GO
What's your next action?

SWITCH THE SCRIPT

WHAT MY HEAD SAYS		WHAT'S ACTUALLY TRUE
"I'm rubbish."	→	*"I missed one. I'll get the next."*
	→	
	→	

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

USE YOUR RESET

Next time you make a mistake this week, on the pitch or off it, try your reset routine. Write down what happened.

What happened?

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PRAY

God, thank you that my mistakes don't get the final say. Help me get back up. Amen.

4 · CONNECT

What if you try hard and still fail?
Real Life on onsidefaith.co.uk. Or talk it through with your coach or the Onside chaplain.

SESSION 5 CHARACTER

05

WHEN NO ONE'S WATCHING

The ref didn't see it. You know the ball hit your hand before it went in. What do you do? Character is who you are when you think nobody's watching.

1 DISCOVER

THE MAN UP THE TREE

LUKE 19:1–10

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector in Jericho, and he was very rich, mostly because he'd been cheating people for years. When Jesus came to town, Zacchaeus was too short to see over the crowd, so he climbed a tree.

Jesus stopped right underneath, looked up and called him by name. He told Zacchaeus to hurry down, because he was coming to his house that day. The crowd were furious. Why would Jesus spend time with someone like him?

But meeting Jesus changed Zacchaeus. He promised to give half of everything he owned to the poor, and to pay back four times whatever he'd taken from anyone.

> **THE BIG IDEA**
>
> **Integrity means being the same person on and off the pitch, whether anyone's watching or not. And when you get it wrong, you put it right.**

2 THINK

MEMORY VERSE

“What does the LORD require of you, but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

MICAH 6:8

☐ I can say it without looking

1. What would you really do in the handball moment? Be honest!

2. Why do you think meeting Jesus made Zacchaeus want to change?

3. Where is it hardest to do the right thing: at training, at school, at home or online?

LEVEL UP · 13+

Micah says act justly, love mercy and walk humbly. Which of those comes easiest to you, and which is hardest?

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER

3 TRY

TOUGH CALLS

What's the right call? Write what you'd do.

Your mate copies your homework and asks you to keep quiet about it.

You find a £10 note on the changing-room floor.

Someone's being laughed at in the group chat.

The coach steps away and your group starts messing about.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

THE HONEST WEEK

Try to be completely honest all week, even in the small things. Tick each day you managed it.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PRAY

God, help me be the same person whether anyone's watching or not. Amen.

4 · CONNECT

VAR: Truth and Accountability

Football & Faith talk on onsidefaith.co.uk. Or talk it through with your coach or the Onside chaplain.

SESSION 6 CHARACTER

06

KINDNESS COUNTS

Anyone can be kind to their mates. The real test is how you treat the other team, the new kid, or the person who's just wound you up.

1 DISCOVER

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

LUKE 10:25–37

Someone asked Jesus who counts as their neighbour, so Jesus told a story. A man was travelling when robbers attacked him, took everything and left him half dead by the road. A priest came past, saw him and crossed to the other side. Then a temple worker did exactly the same.

Then a Samaritan came along. Jews and Samaritans were bitter rivals, a bit like two teams who really can't stand each other. But the Samaritan stopped, bandaged the man's wounds, put him on his own donkey, took him to an inn and paid for him to stay until he was better.

Jesus asked which one had been a neighbour. The answer was obvious: the one who showed mercy. Jesus said, go and do the same.

> **THE BIG IDEA**
>
> **Kindness isn't just for the people on your side. It crosses lines.**

2 THINK

MEMORY VERSE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control.”

GALATIANS 5:22-23

☐ I can say it without looking

1. Why do you think the first two people walked past?

2. Who would be the most surprising person to stop and help you?

3. What’s one kind thing someone did for you that you’ve never forgotten?

LEVEL UP · 13+

Is it harder to be kind online or face to face? Why do you think that is?

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER

3 TRY

FRUIT CHECK

How much can people see each of these in you? Colour in the stars, then circle one you'd like to grow.

Love	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Joy	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Peace	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Patience	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Kindness	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Goodness	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Faith	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Gentleness	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Self-control	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

THE ONE I WANT TO GROW, AND HOW:

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

KINDNESS ON THE PITCH

Shake hands with every opponent. Help someone up. Clap a good bit of play from the other team. Then write down three kind things you did this week.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PRAY

God, grow your kindness in me, especially towards people I find it hard to be kind to. Amen.

4 · CONNECT

Do you have to love people you can't stand?

Football & Faith talk on onsidefaith.co.uk. Or talk it through with your coach or the Onside chaplain.

SESSION 7 PURPOSE

07

SERVICE BEFORE STATUS

Who carries the kit bag? Who stays behind to pick up the cones? The big names don't usually do the jobs nobody notices. Jesus turned that upside down.

1 DISCOVER

A TOWEL AND A BOWL OF WATER

JOHN 13:1–17

On the night before he died, Jesus was eating with his friends. People walked everywhere in sandals on dusty roads, so their feet were filthy. Washing guests' feet was a job for the lowest servant in the house.

Jesus got up from the table, wrapped a towel round his waist, poured water into a bowl and began washing his friends' feet, one by one. Peter was horrified and tried to stop him.

But Jesus said he was showing them what real leadership looks like. If he had washed their feet, they should do the same for each other.

THE BIG IDEA

At Onside we say service comes before status. The greatest leaders are the ones who serve.

2 THINK

MEMORY VERSE

"For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

MARK 10:45

☐ I can say it without looking

1. What jobs at training or at home does nobody notice?

2. How would it feel if the best player in the world cleaned your boots?

3. Who do you know who serves other people without wanting any credit?

LEVEL UP · 13+

Some young people at Onside go on to coach younger players. What would you want to pass on to someone younger than you?

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER

3 TRY

CAPTAIN'S ARMBAND

Great captains serve their team. Write five things that make a great captain around the armband, then list ways you could serve in each place.



A GREAT CAPTAIN IS...

AT HOME	AT TRAINING	AT SCHOOL

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

UNDERCOVER SERVANT

Do three helpful things this week without being asked and without telling anyone. Tick them off here.

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PRAY

Jesus, you served people when you didn't have to. Help me do the same. Amen.

4 · CONNECT

The Captain's Leadership

Football & Faith talk on onsidefaith.co.uk. Or talk it through with your coach or the Onside chaplain.

SESSION 8 PURPOSE

08

YOUR PART TO PLAY

You might think you're too young to make a difference. Too small, not skilful enough, not old enough yet. The Bible's full of young people who proved that wrong.

1 DISCOVER

FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH

JOHN 6:1–14

A huge crowd, more than five thousand people, had followed Jesus into the countryside to hear him. As it got late, everyone was starving and there was nowhere to buy food. Jesus' friends had no idea what to do.

Then Andrew found a boy who'd brought his lunch: five small loaves and two fish. It was nothing next to the size of the crowd. But the boy handed it over. Jesus thanked God for it and shared it out, and everyone ate until they were full. There were even twelve baskets of leftovers.

It all started with a young person giving what he had.

THE BIG IDEA

You've got something to give right now, not just when you're older. God can do a lot with a little.

2 THINK

MEMORY VERSE

"Let no man despise your youth; but be an example to those who believe, in word, in your way of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity."

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

☐ I can say it without looking

1. What are your 'loaves and fish': the things you're good at or could offer?

2. Why do you think Jesus used the boy's lunch instead of starting from nothing?

3. What's something in your community you'd love to change?

LEVEL UP · 13+

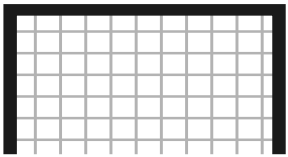
What do you think your purpose might be? It's fine if you don't know yet. Write down what you're wondering about.

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER

3 TRY

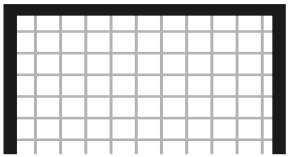
MY GAME PLAN

Set three goals, one in each net, and write the first step you could take towards each one.



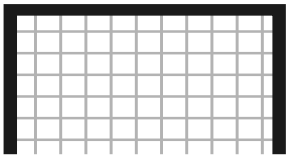
FOOTBALL GOAL

First step:



LIFE GOAL

First step:



HELPING OTHERS

First step:

FIVE YEARS FROM NOW, I'D LOVE TO BE...

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

GIVE YOUR LOAVES

Choose one thing you're good at and use it to help someone this week.

What happened?

IF YOU'D LIKE TO PRAY

God, here's what I've got. Please use it to do something good. Amen.

4 · CONNECT

Free Kick Specialist

Football & Faith talk on onsidefaith.co.uk. Or talk it through with your coach or the Onside chaplain.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

MEMORY VERSE TRACKER

Tick each one when you can say it without looking. **Top tip:** say it out loud while you do keepy-ups, one word per touch.

- [ ] **1 JOHN 3:1**
  See how great a love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God!

- [ ] **ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10**
  Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow.

- [ ] **PSALM 139:14**
  I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful.

- [ ] **PROVERBS 24:16**
  A righteous man falls seven times, and rises up again.

- [ ] **MICAH 6:8**
  What does the LORD require of you, but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

- [ ] **GALATIANS 5:22-23**
  But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control.

- [ ] **MARK 10:45**
  For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

- [ ] **1 TIMOTHY 4:12**
  Let no man despise your youth; but be an example to those who believe, in word, in your way of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity.

GRATITUDE

GRATITUDE WEEK

Noticing the good stuff changes how you feel about everything else. Every day for a week, write down something you're thankful for. It can be big or tiny: a great goal, a friend, a decent dinner.

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

Keep it going: carry on in a notebook, or download a fresh copy of the Playbook for free from onsidefaith.co.uk.

PRAYER

HOW TO PRAY

Prayer is just talking to God. There's no special language and no right way to sit. You can pray out loud, in your head, on a walk or by writing it down. If you're not sure anyone's listening, you can say that too.

FOUR TOUCHES

A simple way to start, like a warm-up drill.

1 THANKS
Say thank you for something good today.

2 SORRY
Be honest about something you got wrong.

3 PLEASE
Ask for help with something you're facing.

4 PASS IT ON
Pray for someone else: a friend, your family, your team.

A VERSE TO THINK ABOUT

"Come to me, all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest."

MATTHEW 11:28

TRY IT NOW

THANKS

SORRY

PLEASE

PASS IT ON

PRAYER

PRAYER JOURNAL

Prayer is just talking to God, in your own words. Write down what you're praying about, then come back and note what happened. Not sure about prayer? Use it as a list of the things you're hoping for. If you'd like to talk about prayer, speak to the Onside chaplain or another Onside leader.

DATE	WHAT I'M PRAYING ABOUT	WHAT HAPPENED

FOR THE CURIOUS AND THE EXPLORING

WHO IS JESUS?

Jesus is the most talked-about person in history. Whatever you believe about him, it's worth knowing who he was and why Christians think he matters so much.

A REAL PERSON

Jesus lived about 2,000 years ago in Israel. He grew up in a small town called Nazareth and worked as a carpenter before he started teaching. Historians, including ones who aren't Christians, agree that he really lived.

WHAT HE DID

He taught about God's love, spent time with people everyone else avoided, healed people and told stories that turned things upside down. You've met some of them in this Playbook.

WHY CHRISTIANS SAY HE MATTERS

Christians believe Jesus is God's Son, who came to show us what God is like. They believe that when he died on a cross and came back to life, he made a way for anyone to be forgiven and to know God.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

You don't have to decide anything today. Lots of people start by reading about Jesus for themselves. Mark's Gospel is short and a good place to begin.

A VERSE TO THINK ABOUT

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only born Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

JOHN 3:16

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT JESUS SO FAR?

IF YOU COULD ASK HIM ONE QUESTION, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

BIG QUESTIONS

HONEST STARTING POINTS

You don't need to have it all figured out. These are questions people genuinely ask, and a few honest places to start.

DOES GOD ACTUALLY EXIST?

Christians believe God made everything and wants to be known. They point to the world itself, to the sense most people have of right and wrong, and above all to Jesus, who they believe shows us what God is like.

Some people are sure God exists, some are sure he doesn't, and lots of people aren't sure. You can't prove it like a maths problem either way, so it's something to explore honestly, with your head and your heart.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?

This is the question almost everyone asks eventually, and there's no neat answer. Christians believe God gave people real freedom, and that a lot of suffering comes from the way we use it. They also believe God isn't distant from pain, because Jesus suffered too.

If you're asking this because something hard has happened to you, that matters more than any answer. Please talk to someone you trust.

"The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart." **PSALM 34:18**

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Explore these and more, like *Does prayer actually work?*, on the Big Questions page at **onsidefaith.co.uk**.

MORE BIG QUESTIONS

WHAT IF I'M NOT SURE ANY OF THIS IS TRUE?

Doubt is normal, even for people with strong faith. In one Bible story a worried dad says to Jesus, "I believe. Help my unbelief!" Jesus didn't send him away. He helped (Mark 9:24).

Asking questions doesn't make you a bad Christian or a bad person. It means you're taking it seriously.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

DO SCIENCE AND FAITH HAVE TO FIGHT?

Plenty of scientists are Christians, and many of them see science as a way of finding out how God's world works. Science is brilliant at explaining how things happen. Faith asks bigger questions about why we're here and what matters.

Some people do see science and faith as opposites. It's worth hearing different views and making up your own mind.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Got a question that isn't here? Write it down on the next page and talk it through with someone you trust.

EXPLORING FAITH

MY BIG QUESTIONS

Got questions about life, God or faith? Good. You don't need to have it all figured out. Write yours down here, then talk them through with the Onside chaplain, an Onside leader or an adult you trust.

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PEOPLE I CAN TALK TO

REAL LIFE

FAITH AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Some things are hard whatever you believe. Here are a few ideas that can help, and a reminder that you don't have to deal with any of it alone.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR BRAIN WON'T SWITCH OFF?

TRY THIS

- Breathe like a penalty taker: in for four, hold for four, out for four. Do it three times.
- Write the worry down so it isn't just going round and round your head.
- Tell someone. Worries usually shrink when they're shared.

Faith angle: "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." *Philippians 4:6*

ONE THING I'LL TRY, AND WHO I COULD TALK TO

IS SOCIAL MEDIA MESSING WITH YOUR HEAD?

TRY THIS

- Remember you're watching people's highlights, not the full match.
- Notice how you feel after scrolling, and unfollow anything that makes you feel worse.
- Put your phone away at least an hour before bed.

Faith angle: Your worth doesn't come from likes or followers. Look back at Psalm 139:14 in Session 3.

ONE THING I'LL TRY, AND WHO I COULD TALK TO

If you're struggling, faith isn't a substitute for proper support. Talk to a parent or carer, your coach, a teacher or your GP. You can call Childline free on **0800 1111**, any time.

MORE REAL LIFE

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH ANGER BEFORE IT DOES SOMETHING WITH YOU?

TRY THIS

- Step away for a minute, like a player taking a breather after a bad tackle.
- Put a name to what you're feeling, and why.
- Sort it out once you've calmed down, not in the heat of the moment.

Faith angle: Being angry isn't wrong. Jesus got angry when people were being treated unfairly. What counts is what you do with it.

ONE THING I'LL TRY, AND WHO I COULD TALK TO

WHAT IF THEY KEEP MAKING YOU THE JOKE?

TRY THIS

- It isn't your fault, and you don't have to put up with it.
- Tell a coach, teacher, parent or carer, and keep telling until something changes.
- Stick close to the people who treat you well.

Faith angle: "A friend loves at all times." *Proverbs 17:17* Be that kind of friend, and look for people who'll be that for you.

ONE THING I'LL TRY, AND WHO I COULD TALK TO

The Real Life page at **onsidefaith.co.uk** has more on friendships, pressure, family, grief, relationships and finding your purpose.

30-DAY CHALLENGE

THE PLAYMAKER CHALLENGE

A playmaker makes everyone around them better. Try one of these every day for 30 days, in any order you like, and tick it off.

1 ☐ Say "well done" to a teammate	**2** ☐ Help pick up the cones	**3** ☐ Thank your coach	**4** ☐ Learn a new skill	**5** ☐ Help at home without being asked
6 ☐ Sit with someone new	**7** ☐ Read one of the stories again	**8** ☐ Shake hands with the other team	**9** ☐ Write down three good things	**10** ☐ Tell someone what they're good at
11 ☐ Turn up early	**12** ☐ Go a whole day without moaning	**13** ☐ Practise with your weaker foot	**14** ☐ Check a friend is OK	**15** ☐ Learn a memory verse
16 ☐ Clear up after yourself	**17** ☐ Encourage someone who made a mistake	**18** ☐ Ask someone about their day and really listen	**19** ☐ Watch a talk on Onside Faith	**20** ☐ Phone away at dinner
21 ☐ Help a younger player	**22** ☐ Say sorry for something	**23** ☐ Ten minutes of keepy-ups	**24** ☐ Be first to help pack away	**25** ☐ Thank someone at home
26 ☐ Stick up for someone	**27** ☐ Five quiet minutes to pray or think	**28** ☐ Give something away	**29** ☐ Invite a friend to training	**30** ☐ Tell someone what you've learned

THE FINAL WHISTLE

FULL-TIME CHECK

You've made it through all eight sessions. Circle a number for each one again.

1 = not really · **3** = sometimes · **5** = definitely

I feel like I belong at Onside.	1 2 3 4 5
I've got people I can talk to when things are hard.	1 2 3 4 5
I believe in myself.	1 2 3 4 5
When I make a mistake, I can bounce back.	1 2 3 4 5
I do the right thing even when nobody's watching.	1 2 3 4 5
I'm kind to people, even ones who aren't my mates.	1 2 3 4 5
I think I've got something good to give.	1 2 3 4 5
I help other people without being asked.	1 2 3 4 5

LOOK BACK AT YOUR PRE-MATCH CHECK. WHAT'S CHANGED?

THE BIGGEST THING I'VE LEARNED

PLAYER OF THE SEASON: SOMEONE WHO HELPED ME GROW

WHAT'S NEXT

KEEP GOING

You've finished the Playbook, but the journey carries on. The Onside Faith website follows the same four steps, Discover, Think, Try and Connect, with a new talk to explore each week.

My Journey
Check in and keep your streak going. It's not a score.

Football & Faith
Short talks that connect football with faith.

Big Questions
Honest places to start with the questions people ask.

Real Life
Identity, pressure, friendships, family and purpose.

Daily Devotional
Faith meets football, with a new thought every day.

What's On
Sessions, mentoring, events and trips near you.

SCAN OR VISIT

onsidefaith.co.uk

Nothing you think or write is collected by the website. If you're under 13, have a look with a parent or carer.

Scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (British Edition), which is in the public domain. Bible stories are retold in our own words; look up the reference to read the full passage.

FOR LEADERS

USING THE PLAYBOOK WITH A GROUP

The Playbook works on its own, but it's even better with a group. Each session takes about 45 minutes and follows the same four steps as the Onside Faith website.

DISCOVER 10 min	Read the opening together and ask who's been in that situation. Read or retell the Bible story, then share the big idea.
THINK 15 min	Say the memory verse together. Talk through the questions in pairs or small groups, and offer the Level up question to over-13s.
TRY 15 min	Do the activity and set the week's challenge. Next time, start by asking how the challenge went.
CONNECT 5 min	Point to the talk or topic on onsidefaith.co.uk. Only end with the prayer if the group is comfortable with it.

GOOD PRACTICE

- Faith is always optional. Invite, never pressure, and make it easy to say no.
- Nobody has to share what they've written.
- Help younger players with the reading, and pair them with older ones where it helps.
- Respect every young person's background and beliefs.
- Follow Onside's safeguarding policy. If a young person tells you something worrying, don't promise to keep it secret, and pass it to the designated safeguarding lead the same day.

FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

WHAT YOUR CHILD IS WORKING THROUGH

WHAT IS THE PLAYBOOK?

An eight-session workbook that uses football to help young people think about belonging, confidence, character and purpose. It goes alongside the Onside Faith website, onsidefaith.co.uk.

IS IT RELIGIOUS?

Onside is a Christian charity, and each session includes a Bible story, a verse and an optional prayer. Your child doesn't need to be a Christian to use it, and taking part in anything faith-based is always their choice. Everyone is welcome and questions are encouraged.

IS THE WEBSITE SAFE TO USE?

Onside Faith doesn't collect or store the reflections, prayers or journal entries young people make. If your child is under 13, we'd suggest looking at it together.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Ask about the week's challenge, talk about the questions over dinner, and try not to mark it. There are no wrong answers.

SAFEGUARDING

Onside has a safeguarding policy and designated safeguarding leads. If you have any concerns, speak to your child's coach or contact Onside directly. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

onsidefaith.co.uk · Onside Soccer is the working name of Onside Ministries, registered charity no. 1149686.

MY ONSIDE TEAM

WHO'S GOT MY BACK

MY COACH

MY GROUP

I TRAIN AT

ON

MY MENTOR

A FRIEND AT ONSIDE

ONSIDE CHAPLAIN

NEED TO TALK?

If something's worrying you, you feel unsafe, or you think somebody may be in danger, you don't have to deal with it on your own. Talk to your coach, the Onside chaplain, another Onside leader or an adult you trust. Every Onside project has a safeguarding lead whose job is to keep you safe.

Faith can be a real source of hope, but it doesn't replace professional help when somebody is struggling.

CHILDLINE · FREE, ANY TIME

0800 1111

childline.org.uk

If you're in danger right now, call 999.

ONSIDE SOCCER

ONSIDE PLUS

DIFFERENT CHARACTERS. SAME SIDE.

The Playbook is a free eight-session workbook connecting football, faith and real life, for players aged 9 to 16. It goes alongside the Onside Faith website and follows the same four steps: Discover, Think, Try and Connect.

Everyone is welcome. Faith is optional. Questions are encouraged.

onsidefaith.co.uk

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