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## **Something I Love, Someone I Love**

Olamide is a pharmacist by profession and a basketball coach. Through a passionate training of upcoming student basketballers, she is creating a furrow of diligence in little things.

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For me, basketball has always been just sports. A sport I really love but, simply sports.

I came across the book - “The Way” and St. Josemaría’s message about elevating everything to God, every human activity and transforming it from within. It then occurred to me that even while playing sports, we can find God there. So, I told Our Lord – “Lord, from now on... we will do the balling together!”

So now, when I shoot hoops and score, I tell Our Lord, “Lord this basket is for you.”

And when I shoot hoops and don’t score, I say “Lord, this effort I made to shoot this hoop is for you”.  
Nothing given to God is ever wasted.

But, it was just still a personal discovery. Something that was useful for me. I was now playing basketball with a lot more intention! And then I realized that it gives me the opportunity to cultivate solid human virtues. These human virtues which are a necessary basis for developing

supernatural virtues. Obedience, loyalty, self-control, discipline, optimism, integrity, self-knowledge, emotional stability, stress management, team work and so on. It dawned on me that sports is also such a good avenue to form people: I mean if it helped me, why not others?

A few months later, my friends and I approached the principal of a secondary school close to my home with the idea of starting a leadership and sports club. This would be a great opportunity for the girls to learn about and cultivate virtues through sports. He agreed and the club started.

Of course, I was excited. I get to pass on to more people something I love and, that should be wonderful! More importantly, the girls get to grow into better versions of themselves in the process. This is also an opportunity

for me to introduce these girls to someone I love - Jesus.

The available practice time is a little less than 2 hours once a week. We start by talking about the central theme for the day, for example, team work and I give them practical examples of how they can practise that on the court with their team mates. This lasts for about ten minutes.

Then, we continue the practice with the drills planned for the day. Depending on how the practice is going, we may need to call a team meeting during it to reassess the situation. At the end of practice, we talk about how the practice has gone and everyone is encouraged to give their opinion and, we give ourselves things we need to work on, or to look out for at the next practice.

I've found that a periodic, personal, one on one mentoring session with

the girls is necessary in order to help them work through the things they are learning in the Club. Or just to talk about whatever they feel like.

This is what has been going on for the past three months (except when they're on holidays). Although we've only just begun, I can already see how much good this is doing. It has been such a learning experience for all of us. I'm learning to be a lot more patient with the girls and they are learning to demand more from themselves. I've seen their bond as a team grow. They have also grown in consideration for each other; they listen more, focus better and I have come to love these girls a lot.

Really, every single thing we do can be elevated to God, and can be transformed into something more beautiful. I'm totally excited for the many possibilities this holds for me.

*Olamide Akinyede*

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