

News Story Summary

After being named manager of the St. Louis Cardinals in mid-July, Mike Shildt announced that the team would meet before every game for what he called Ball Talk. In these meetings, players talk about what went well the day before, what they need to work on, and how they can be successful in the next game. Shildt is in the meeting, but mostly he takes notes – the players do the talking.

Since “Ball Talk” started on July 20, St. Louis has a winning record and are contending for a National League wild-card spot (as of 9/14/18). "Some people have a way of making everyone feel involved," says Matt Carpenter, who plays infield. "You either have that skill set or you don't. He's got it. He has a way of bringing everyone into the conversation." Shortstop Paul DeJong says, “It makes a huge difference for us. It’s the new normal.”

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the term “Mike Shildt ball talk”.)

Focus Attention

To supplement the Focus Attention idea, begin by following the instructions under Introduce. Then share the news story above. Note that Mike Shildt is a coach who is having a positive impact on his players, while also improving his team’s record. Then lead the group to discuss the questions under Ask: *What are some fond memories that you have of coaches in your life? What influence did they have on you?*

Challenge

To supplement the Summarize and Challenge idea under MORE IDEAS, remind the group of the news story about baseball manager Mike Shildt and his Ball Talk meetings. Note that every team member is involved in the meetings and as a result, the team has been winning more games. Suggest that in the same way a coach can reach out to encourage and involve every player, believers can reach out to encourage and involve other believers. Follow the instructions under Summarize and Challenge to think of ideas for reaching out to fellow believers who need to be renewed in striving for Christlikeness.