

## FIRESIDE STUDY

### A prayerful approach to footy

Film: [Pukatja Sports](#)

#### Introduction:

Pukatja, formerly known as 'Ernabella' is about 1400 km from Adelaide. It was established in 1938 as a Presbyterian mission, and it has once again become an Aboriginal community for the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (traditional owners) and the other five Aboriginal communities (Amata, Pipalyatjara, Fregon/Kaltjiti, Indulkana and Mimili).



Walk with me on a journey to the Pukatja Sports weekend.

You are invited to join the ring of men who have gathered to pray before their 'sudden death' football game. You'll hear the words spoken, some in English but much in Pitjantjatjara, "We say thank you for this day Walkunmala, thank you for bringing us here and our families and our country Walkunmala. We want to put you in front, look after us..."

#### Key issues:

##### The Elder

Consider the Elder/coach and his position within the team and the importance of his role off and on the field. He reminds the team they have just prayed and they are to go out there and play football, not to react to the rough play that could happen. You hear the urgency in his voice as he speaks to the team in Pitjantjatjara at the half time chat. You see him walking off slowly with the defeated team towards the showers and you hear what he says to them. He then shares about the need for the guys to play football as their fathers did back in the late '50's early '60's. But is there a question of doubt on his mind about the significance of football in their lives?

##### The team

Think about the team and how they reacted to the umpiring, to the other players and to themselves as a team. We saw the team playing a normal game of football. Bad decisions were made, unfair calls were given and frustration appearing at the half time chat and at the end of the game. But we didn't see any of the players reacting negatively towards another player or umpire while the game was going on. Why? We see nearly every match of AFL being played someone striking another, swearing at the unfair decisions being made, why not here? What was the difference? Was there a difference?

##### The prayer

Reflect on the significance of the game to their everyday life and on the prayer they had prayed. What is the game to each person present at the match? The coaches, the umpires, the players, the spectators, what is the real significance to their lives? How does it affect them when it is over? The Elder/coach reflects on that and tells us that sometimes it raises personal problems to you, family problems and that to keep up because of their forefathers before them playing and that it is good to keep the tradition of playing football. Look deeply into eyes of the coach, do you see any doubt?

#### Suggested questions:

- The significance of an Elder in Aboriginal life is very important. They hold the wisdom, the stories of Dreamtime and they hold together the very fabric of culture, custom/law and traditional life. For yourself, do you see a similar need in your life, why/why not?
- How do you see the value of prayer<sup>1</sup>? Is it something you just do because you have a faith-based belief? Or do you believe that it blesses, heals, answers and brings thanks to every aspect of your life?
- What was your reaction to the beginning of the film, when the guy was praying<sup>2</sup>?
- Is there doubt in your mind about tradition? For Christians: do you struggle to hold on to any part of Christian tradition? What were Christ's struggles with tradition<sup>3</sup>? Brainstorm what tradition might be for your group, what would you hold dear and what would you 'toss'.

Christian references: <sup>1</sup>Romans 12:12, Eph 6:18, <sup>2</sup>Col 3:6, Mark 6:50, <sup>3</sup>John 2:13-17