



Volume 8, Number 5: April/May 2005
A Sporting Good Time in Kansas

Name _____

Worksheet 1: Little League Baseball

Little League baseball began in the 1930s in Pennsylvania. Teams soon formed across the nation for children ages 5 through 18. It is believed to be the world's largest organized youth sports program today. About three million Little Leaguers play baseball in every U.S. state and 105 other countries.

Presidents have honored Little League baseball through the years. Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower [1953-61] and John F. Kennedy [1961-63] both proclaimed National Little League Week, held in mid-June. President Ronald Reagan [1981-89] invited Little Leaguers to the White House South Lawn for a celebration in 1984. President George H. W. Bush [1989-93] held a celebration for Little League's 50th Anniversary at the White House in 1989.

In the summer of 2001 President George W. Bush [2001-present] launched his White House Tee Ball Initiative. Little League tee ball teams are invited to the White House to play a game on the South Lawn once a month during the summer. Teams are selected by Little League Baseball in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and can be nominated online at www.littleleague.org. The players, managers, and coaches receive special gifts from the President.

President George W. Bush is the only president who played Little League as a child. He played during the 1950s for the Cubs, a Little League team in Midland, Texas. Today President Bush feels strongly that Little League baseball is a good influence on children.

At the Little League Baseball World Series in 2001 the President said, "I want to thank all the coaches for working with the kids. You're not only teaching the kids how to throw and hit, you're teaching them incredibly important values: the values of good clean competition; the values of teamwork; the values of working with somebody to win for something greater than yourself."