



# Links Players

## HOLY AND COMMON

“They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common...”  
(Ezekiel 44:23, NIV)

**G**ROWING UP, I learned the fundamentals of the game right down the street, on the practice grounds and winding holes of the country club where my father was a member. A four-hole loop of this 18-hole course surrounded that practice area, so it was to a normal regimen to work out some ballstriking aspects on the range, then put them to test with a jaunt around those four holes.

When I got to high school, I moved further down the road, about four miles, across the railroad tracks and through the fig orchards to “the big muni.” This was where my team played its golf and the place where I learned to compete. My first season we had 15 players vying for six varsity spots, so you put up a number or you didn’t get to play the matches. Even when a junior varsity match was added, I found myself on the outside of the lineup. I practiced hard that summer to catch up!

Apart from the golf itself, I learned an important lesson playing golf in these two places: The rules for a muni are not the same as they are at the country club.

I do not mean the *Rules of Golf* are different, of course. Those stay the same everywhere. But whereas the club monitored its expectations regarding clothing and sometimes demeanor, the muni’s players included those who wore cutoff shorts, T-shirts, and sometimes no shirt at all. I still play that muni quite often, and I will say that I haven’t seen a shirtless golfer there in years, but you get the idea. What I was observing was golf’s version of the holy and the common.

In the Old Testament, God gave his people the law, a set of rules for them to live and worship by. He also gave them priests to administer the law. This included the absolutes—right and wrong. It also included cleanness and uncleanness in terms of foods and ritual washing. Touching a dead body rendered a person unclean for a time, as did a woman’s period. These were real-life pictures God gave the people to help them remember that there is a difference between the world we live in and the nature of his character. He is holy. Much surrounding us is not.

Look around. How do you view the world you live in? Do you see it as a place where you can introduce the holy to the common, where you can bring the light of Christ to the darkness? This is what God has always wanted for his people. And now we are the ones called to carry this bright torch.

**Opening questions** Does your cub have rules that other places do not? How does this set your club apart? • Where do you see places in the world where “the common” is evident and in need of “the holy”?

**READING** Ezek. 44:15-31; 1 Ptr. 2:9-10; 1 Ptr. 1:14-16; 1 Cor. 10:23-11:1

### The priests as pictures of holiness (Ezekiel 44 & 1 Peter 2)

How were the priests set apart in the way they lived? In what ways does this picture remind you that we should be careful to honor God in the way we live, since we are now part of “a royal priesthood”?

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### The call to holiness (1 Peter 1)

What defined our lives before we were in Christ? What should be the defining characteristic now? What are two or three ways you can obey the call to holiness in your life beginning today?

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### Freedom and holiness (1 Corinthians 10-11)

What aspects of common vs. holy are at play in this passage? What principles of right and wrong should dictate the way we relate to others, particularly so that some may be saved?

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