



of Middle Tennessee

We build strong kids, strong families,  
strong communities.

## *Brentwood Family Center*

# **Character Development Activities**

**Caring**

**Honesty**

**Respect**

**Responsibility**

### **Our Mission**

A worldwide charitable fellowship united by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ  
for the purpose of helping persons grow in spirit, mind and body.

## Character Development Activities: Sports

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Activity: What It Takes To Succeed

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: Newsprint, marker

Description:

1. Ask the players to sit in a circle and share the following House Rules:
  - a. Accept others: Recognize that everyone has ideas of value and we owe it to them to hear what they have to say.
  - b. Speak for yourself: Say what you think or feel, but don't try to speak for others.
  - c. Avoid putting others down: Every idea is important and every person is important.
  - d. Option to pass: While we hope everyone participates, everyone does not have to share their thoughts or feelings on every issue.
2. Ask the players to think about what it takes for players to enjoy being on a team together. You might begin by saying, "Everyone should try to encourage each player, regardless of their ability." Then, write or draw a picture of your idea on the newsprint.
3. Encourage each player to add to the list, each time having the player write or draw the idea on the newsprint. You can add meaning to this experience by asking clarifying statements such as "How can we encourage or show care for each player?"
4. When the list is complete, make sure everyone understands it. Then, ask the players to vote on which idea is most important. Each player gets to vote for three ideas. Tally the votes and encourage the players to work on the idea receiving the most votes during the next week.

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Activity: Sticking Your Neck Out

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Ask the players to sit in a circle. Tell them you would like them to listen closely to the following story and then discuss how they would respond to this situation.

“You and your best friend are playing together on a team in another league. This team has not talked about the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The coach and the players are primarily interested in winning as many games as possible. With just a few seconds remaining in the game and your team losing by one point, the ball goes out of bounds off your friend’s foot. The referee was unable to see what happened. Being an honest player, your friend tells the official that she touched the ball last. The official awards the ball to the other team costing your team one final chance to win the game.”

“After the game, the coach and other players are berating your friend for telling the truth. They say it was the official’s responsibility to make the correct call and your friend should have kept quiet. Because of her, the team lost the game.”

2. Ask the players to talk about all the things they could do in this situation. (Examples: do not say a word, join the players in berating your friend, tell the other players to back off, talk to the coach after the game telling her how disappointed you were that your friend was criticized for being honest, etc.) As they give their answers, ask them if that particular response shows a caring attitude that supports a friend.
3. Point out that caring for people sometimes means taking a stand when it is not popular to do so.

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Activity: Focus Person

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Divide the team into groups of three. Explain that you are going to read a definition of caring and fair play, which the groups will proceed to handle in the following way: One person talks about the definition for three minutes. During this time, the other members of the group listen. The listeners may help the focus person say more about the subject by asking questions or making a short statement. (The listeners may draw out the focus person but not insert their own views. This is not a group discussion.) Take turns so that each player in each group has the opportunity to talk for three minutes.
2. Read one of the following statements for each focus person.
  - a. "Fair play involves respect and caring for the opponent. What are some ways you can show caring for an opponent?"
  - b. "Fair play involves showing concern for a teammate who is feeling down. What are some ways you can encourage a teammate who is feeling down?"
  - c. "Fair play includes caring for the officials. What are some ways you can show concern and care for the officials?"
3. When everyone in each group has had a chance to be the focus person, ask the players to forget the content of the discussion and to focus on what happened in communication. Ask, "How did you feel when you listened? How did you feel when you were listened to?"
4. Point out that one of the most important ways we can show that we care for someone is to listen to them.

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Activity: Volunteer Service

Ages: All

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Point out to the players that one of the ways to demonstrate caring is to volunteer to do things for other people. Ask the team to brainstorm different things they can do for other people. (Examples: rake leaves, mow lawns, wash cars, carry groceries, etc.)

2. Encourage each team member to volunteer once during the season and bring a note verifying they did it. At the final practice or game, ask each player to tell about their volunteer experience.

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Activity: Random Acts of Kindness

Ages: All

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Tell the players another way of demonstrating caring is to do kind things for other people. Ask the players to brainstorm ideas of things they could do to be kind to the other members of their families. (Examples: mow the lawn, cook dinner or wash dishes, help sisters and brothers with their homework, clean their rooms, etc.)
2. Encourage each player to do one kind act for each member of their family during the next week and bring a note verifying these things were done. At next week's practice or game, ask the players to tell about their acts of kindness.

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Activity: Seek and Ye Shall Find

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: Deck of playing cards, handkerchief or blindfold

Description:

1. Sort the playing cards so that you have enough cards for each player to have one card. Be sure to pair the cards so that you have two cards of the same value. (Example: If you have 10 players, you will need two aces, two kings, two queens, two jacks, and two nines.)
2. Shuffle the cards and give one to each player instructing them not to show it to anyone. Next, tell the team that you will give them three minutes to find

the other person with the same value card as theirs. Only there is one catch: Players may not talk or show their cards to anybody.

3. Before you start, ask for one volunteer to be blindfolded. Say, "Go," and keep a close eye on the volunteer so that he or she remains safe.
4. Watch your team. How do they communicate? Most of all, do they help the blindfolded person? If so, how long did it take them to help? How did they help? Share your observations with the team when the activity ends.
5. Conclude by reminding them if we are to be caring people, we must watch for the chance to serve others, and when we see opportunities, we must act on them.

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Activity: Stroke or Stare

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Ask your team to stand side-by-side in a straight line facing you and to remain quiet in military-like fashion. Walk down the line looking at each of your players for five seconds without saying a word and without any facial expression (like General Patton might have done).
2. Now go back down the line again and pay each player a compliment (like Hawkeye of "M\*A\*S\*H"). Then, ask your team to sit in a circle and talk about how each situation felt and which one was the most encouraging.
3. Point out to your players that caring is often not just the big things that we do, but instead is lots of little things, like encouraging each other. Follow your comments with a quick illustration as to how one of your players has modeled caring for their teammates. Conclude by asking each player to share one positive thing about being on the team.

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Activity: Who Cares?

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Have the players sit in a circle in the team huddle area. Tell the following story to the players:  
“You are running/cycling in a race and stand a very good chance of finishing in first place. As you are running/cycling, one of your competitors falls and is seriously hurt. What would you do?”
2. Ask the players to identify what some of their options might be in this situation. Examples are:
  - a. stop and help the injured person
  - b. keep on moving and tell the first official you see that someone is hurt back on the course
  - c. keep on moving and let someone else worry about the injured person
3. Ask them to discuss what the consequences might be when choosing each option.
4. Review with your team the importance of caring for both your teammates and opponents when competing in sports.

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Activity: Honesty is the Best Policy

Ages: All

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: Sheet of paper with the word “honesty”

Description:

1. Say, “Today, we are going to discuss honesty. Honesty means to tell the truth and not to mislead or lie. In sports, honesty also means to play fair and not to cheat. Let’s say we are in the last few seconds of a game. The ball bounces between you and two players from the other team, and then out of bounds. You’re sure that the ball hit you last before going out of bounds, but since the three of you were standing there, the official couldn’t see what happened. The official runs up to the three of you and asks, ‘Who touched it last?’”

2. Divide the players into three groups. Ask the first group to decide what could happen if you tell a lie. Ask the second group to talk about what might happen if you do not say anything. Have the third group discuss what could happen if you tell the truth. Let them talk in their groups for two minutes.
3. Have the “tell a lie” group report. If they do not mention it, ask, “What if you get caught? What if your parents saw what happened? What if you lose anyway? What if you win and the other two players tell everyone you would not have won without cheating? What if your coach finds out and decides not to trust you?” The key is to show that most the possible outcomes are not good ones.
4. Have the “do not say anything group” report. Ask them some of the same questions. Also ask, “What is the difference between not saying anything and telling a lie?” Again, emphasize the probability of a bad outcome.
5. Ask the “tell the truth” group to report. Ask, “What is the worst thing that could happen if you tell the truth?” (The other team gets the ball and wins the game. There were a lot of plays that could have changed the outcome of the game. That was just one second in a game of many minutes. By being honest, you don’t have to worry about any negative outcomes from the two groups. You can focus on getting the ball back and winning or losing fairly.”
6. Say, “No matter what you think about cheating, on this team, we will always play fair.”

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Activity: True Blue

Ages: All

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: Paper and pencil for each player

Description:

1. Give one sheet of paper and a pencil to each player. Ask each team member to write down three reasons why being honest is important. After two minutes, ask each player to get with another player and discuss what they wrote. Then, ask a few of the players to share their reasons with the team.
2. Conclude by providing an illustration of how one of the players demonstrated honesty during a practice or game.

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Activity: Practice Makes Perfect

Ages: All

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: Skill chart for each player

Description:

1. Give each player a chart to log the number of times they practice their skills at home. At each practice, check the charts to see how often the players practiced the various skills on their own.
2. Discuss the importance of being honest in completing their charts because they will only get better by practicing and repeating the skills. Talk about how it will affect them if the players are not honest about what they record on their charts.

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Activity: Who Will Know?

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: Four cones

Description:

1. Place the four cones in a line about 10 feet apart. Ask the players to sit in a circle and to listen to the following story:  
“You are looking forward to playing on a team with your friends. All of your friends are a year younger than you are. When the age groups are announced, you find that you are in an older age bracket, which means you will not be able to play with your friends. You will have to join a team at the next age level where the players are much better than you are. The league does not require proof of age.”
2. Tell the players you are going to give them four options. Ask them to choose one of the options and then stand by the cone designated for that option. Cone A: Since the league does not require proof of age, you will just sign up with your friends. Nobody will ever know the difference. Cone B: You will sign

up to play in your correct age group. Cone C: You will not play at all. Cone D: You will check with the league officials to see if there are some other options available to you before making a final decision.

3. Once the players have made their selections, ask the players at each cone why they chose that particular option. What are the consequences of choosing that option?
4. Conclude by pointing out the importance of being honest even though at times we may not be able to do what we want as a result of our honesty.

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Activity: Trigger Story

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Tell the players you are going to read them an incomplete story. Ask them to listen carefully.  
“There was once a well-known golfer who was in a major tournament. He played very well and was in the lead on the final day. When the tournament was over, he went to the score tent where he was to review his score. Everyone thought he had won the tournament. In reviewing his score card, he found that early in the day he had put down (accidentally) a lower score on a particular hole than what he actually had. To not correct the score would give him the victory. If he corrected the score, he would lose the tournament and have to explain to everyone waiting outside what happened.”
2. Ask the players for their thoughts on all the things the golfer could do. What are his options? Once they have come up with some options, ask the players to discuss the consequences of each option. Conclude by asking the group what an honest person would do in this situation.

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Activity: Whips

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: One ball

Description:

1. Ask the players to stand in a circle. Tell them you are going to pass the ball to someone in the circle and ask them to complete a sentence. Once they have completed the sentence, they can pass the ball to another player in the circle who will complete the sentence with their own answer. It is important for each player to get the ball before going on to the next incomplete sentence.
  - a. My favorite sport is...
  - b. A professional player I admire is...
  - c. Something I like about the player I named is...
  - d. Honesty is...
  - e. Someone who I think is an honest sports player is...
  - f. One way to be honest in a sport is...
  - g. It's hardest to be honest when...
  - h. A reward for being honest might be...
  - i. One thing that could happen to someone who is not honest is...
2. During the "whip," keep the ball moving and limit players to quick responses, not lengthy discussions. Later, you may want to go back to any statement where you think players may want to talk more about their responses.

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Activity: Who Stole the Ball?

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Have the players sit in a circle. Tell the players you are going to provide them with a situation and four options to choose from in responding to that situation. Read the following paragraph to the team.

"After the game, you saw a member of your team take a ball that belonged to the other team. You would:

  - a. send a note to your coach telling what you saw, but leave it unsigned so you won't have to get involved.
  - b. say nothing because it is wrong to tattle on someone
  - c. tell what you saw because it is wrong to withhold the truth and let your team take the consequences if the theft is discovered.

- d. tell the player who took the ball that you saw what he did and tell him to return the ball.”
2. Divide the team into pairs and have them discuss with their partners which of the options they would choose and what the consequences might be by choosing that option. Allow two to three minutes for discussion. Ask a few of the pairs to share their responses with the team. Point out the importance of being honest and how it contributes to the success of the team.

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Activity: The Extra Ticket

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: Four cones

Description:

1. Place four cones in a square near your team's huddle area. Label the cones A, B, C, and D. Tell the players you are going to provide them with a situation and four options to choose from in responding to that situation. Read the following paragraph to the players:  
“You sent a check for two tickets to see the professional team play in your area. By mistake, you were sent three tickets. You would:
  - a. give the third ticket to a friend who could not afford to buy one
  - b. forget about it
  - c. send it back
  - d. sell it to a friend who couldn't get one.”
2. Ask the players to stand by the cone with the letter of the option they would choose. (It may be necessary to repeat the options for the players.) Once the players are by the cones, ask them why they chose that particular option. If the players did not choose a particular option, ask the team why they didn't choose that option. Point out the importance of being honest in situations that may not specifically relate to the team.

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Activity: The Great Cover-up

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: Four cones

Description:

1. Place four cones in a square near your team's huddle area. Label the cones A, B, C, and D. Tell the players you are going to provide them with a situation and they will have an opportunity to choose how they will respond to that situation.
2. Read the following statement: "Following practice, your best friend on the team wants to go somewhere against her parents' wishes and tells them she is going to be with you as a cover-up. You would:
  - a. say you won't cover for her and then worry about losing her friendship
  - b. agree; her friendship is more important than being honest
  - c. refuse, explaining your feelings and hoping she'll see your side
  - d. say, 'Okay this time, but don't involve me again.'"
3. Tell the players to stand by the cone with the letter of the option they would choose. (It may be necessary to repeat the options for the players.) Once they have made their selections, ask the players by each cone to tell the group why they chose that particular option. Help them to identify the consequences of choosing each option. Conclude the exercise by pointing out the importance of being honest.

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Activity: Liar, Liar!

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: Marking pen, large sheet of paper

Description:

1. Begin by explaining to the team that you want to ask them a few questions and you want them to give you honest answers. Ask them first to guess how many times during their lives they have lied to their parents. (You may want to assure them that you will not tell.) Add their numbers up and write the number on the paper. Then, ask the same question using teachers, friends, brothers, sisters, cousins, etc.
2. Total the numbers and show the team the final amount (probably between 100-150 depending on the number of players and how honest they were).

Explain that we may be surprised as to how often we are not honest if we don't think about it. Share how lying can be habit forming and honesty is something we must work on every day of our lives.

3. Follow your comments with a quick illustration as to how one of your players has modeled being honest. Close by challenging your team to practice being honest in everything they say or do for the following week and see how it feels.

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Activity: Who Gets the Credit?

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Honesty

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1.

2.

3.

1. Tell or read the following story to your team.  
“Susan and Kit played on the same soccer team. With 30 seconds to go in a tie game, Kit stole the ball and along with Susan headed toward the opponent’s goal. Kit had an open shot but saw Susan closer to the net and standing all alone. Kit hesitated, faked a shot at the goalie and then passed the ball to Susan who shot and scored, winning the game.

“Susan shouted with joy, ‘I did it, I did it!’ Susan’s teammates went crazy with excitement, lifting her over their heads and carrying her to the bench where her parents proudly announced they were treating everybody on the team to pizza and soda. Kit stood alone to the side and looked on.”

2. Ask your team to talk about these four questions:
  - a. Who really won the game?
  - b. Was Susan a credit-hog?
  - c. What should Kit do now?
  - d. What should the team have done differently?
3. After some discussion, explain to your team how hard it is to sometimes say, “We did it,” when there is glory to be had. However, being honest means giving credit to everyone who deserves it, and that includes the entire team. Challenge your team to practice being honest by giving credit to everyone.

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Activity: Respect for the Officials

Ages: All

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: Four cones

Description:

1. Say, "Today we are going to discuss respect. To respect someone means that you think that he or she is a good person and does important things. You look up to people you respect."
2. Say, "There are people important to sports who often do not get respect. These are the officials. Why do we need officials? (To enforce the rules.) Why do we need rules? (To make the game fair.) What would happen if we did not have officials? (Rules would not be enforced.) Actually, it would not be much fun to play a game without the officials."
3. Place four cones in a row near the practice area. Ask the players why people do not like the officials. (They think they cheat or are unfair.) Ask the players to stand up. Say, "If you think the officials always cheat, stand by the first cone. If you think the officials often cheat, stand by the second cone. If you think the officials sometimes cheat, stand by the third cone. If you think the officials never cheat, stand by the fourth cone. Don't worry about where others are standing, just go where you think is right."
4. Depending on where they stand, ask the players why they think officials always, often, sometimes, or never cheat. If someone says, "So the other team will win," ask why the official would want the other team to win. Discuss why officials would want the other team to win and inform the players you will continue this discussion at the next practice.

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Activity: More Respect for the Officials

Ages: All

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: Four cones

Description: