



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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.”

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Activity: More Respect for the Officials

Ages: All

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: Four cones

Description:

1. Review the previous activity related to respecting officials. Place four cones near the team practice area and ask the players to stand. Say, "If you think the officials always care who wins a YMCA game, stand by the first cone. If you think they often care who wins, stand by the second cone. If you think they sometimes care, stand by the third cone. If you think they never care, stand by the fourth cone."
2. Ask the players standing by the cones of "always" or "often care who wins" why they think officials care about who wins. Short of having a parent or another player officiating, most of the reasons should be interesting and invalid.
3. Ask everyone to sit down. Ask, "Why do you think people officiate YMCA games?" Allow time for responses. Say, "I think most of our officials would say it's because they love the sport and want to help young people like yourselves learn to play it correctly. So, if they really do not cheat because they do not really care who wins the game, but are just here to help you enjoy and learn the game, I think they deserve some respect. In fact on our team, it is required to respect the officials."

Activity: Bad Calls

Ages: All

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Ask the players what they should do if they think the official made a bad call. Allow time for responses. Say, "If you say something bad to the official, make a face, kick the ball, or in any way complain, how do you think that makes the official feel? Do you think it makes the official like you more? I don't think so."
2. Say, "First, since we already decided the official doesn't care who wins, we can assume that he or she did not make the bad call on purpose. Second, it is just your opinion that it was a bad call. And finally, I want you to show officials respect because they are helping you to learn the game."
3. Tell them to talk to their families that night about why it is important to show respect to the officials.

Activity: Respect for Teammates

Ages: All

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Point out that on a team, it is important that all players respect their teammates, because they are not a team without every one of them. Divide the team into two equal groups. If one group has one more member than the other, you should participate.
2. Tell the groups you want them to line up in a single file as fast as they can in the order you tell them to. They can race to see which group can line up the fastest.
3. Say, "I want you to line up from shortest to tallest." After both groups have done that, check the winner and congratulate both groups. Say, "Now line up by birthday month with January in the front and December in the back. Next, by biggest foot to smallest. Now think about the letter your first name starts with and line up alphabetically from A to Z. Okay, everybody have a seat back in the circle."
4. Ask, "Now, in that game, who were the most important players: the short ones or tall ones?" (They were all equally important to the team.) "The same is true for when you were born, how big your foot is, or what your name is. The fact is that every person is important on a team and worthy of respect. Teamwork is when everyone does his or her part, no matter what that is or how much attention it gets."
5. Say, "Some players on this team may be faster, some taller, and some better at scoring, but we need every one of you to be a team. I want all of you to respect all of your teammates and what they have to offer. That is what will make us as successful as a team."

Activity: All the Same Would Be a Boring Game

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Divide your team into groups of three. Tell the groups they have one minute to come up with as many differences as they can about the people in their groups (short/tall, black/white, loud/quiet). Give an example and let them begin.
2. After a minute, ask the groups to share some of the differences they discussed with the whole team. They will probably have many, although some may be on the silly side. Now ask the team if the differences are a good or bad thing. Direct the conversation to show the team the positive impact differences have in our lives and that total "sameness" would be very boring.
3. Explain that if we appreciate how we are different, we will find it easier to give respect to one another. Follow your comments with a quick illustration of how one of your players has modeled respect for the differences in others. Close by having the players shake hands with one another as a symbol for respecting their teammates' differences.

Activity: Feed Me Seymour

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: Bubble gum or piece of penny candy for each player

Description:

1. Ask your team to gather together in a small group. Instruct them to start saying their first names over and over again and you will reward the player who does the best job of impressing you with how great his name is. After the players start, they will soon start raising their voices and jockeying for position to get in front of you. Let them go for a minute or two and then ask them to sit down and be quiet.
2. Explain in your own words that this is the way it is with people. If we are always trying to be the center of attention, we will forget about others and often become pushy, rude, and disrespectful. Explain that it is important to

remember that each of us is important and we can communicate that by being respectful of others.

3. Follow your comments with a quick illustration of how one or two of your players has modeled being respectful to others. Close by rewarding the players with a treat and congratulating them all for having great first names.

Activity: Thanks Officials!

Ages: All

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Talk about the importance of respecting the officials with your team. Ask them to share ways they think that they could show appreciation to the officials. Following each game, have each of the players shake the officials' hands and thank them for officiating the game. An alternative would be to appoint one player at each game to thank the officials and shake their hands.

Activity: Self-respect

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Have the players sit in a circle. Tell them when we discuss respect, we often talk about respect for the officials, our teammates, our opponents, our families, and friends. Another type of respect is respect for ourselves.
2. Self-respect means behaving in such a way that we feel good about ourselves and the things we do. We do things because they make us better people. Ask the players to brainstorm some things they can do to feel good and maintain their self-respect. (Examples: eat properly, get enough rest and sleep, refrain from swearing, attend all practices and games, work on their skills at home,

not getting upset when they make a mistake, congratulate teammates when they make good plays, etc.)

3. Conclude by informing the players that those individuals who respect themselves have a greater tendency to respect others as well.

Activity: Cheer for the Other Team

Ages: All

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Discuss with your players the idea of “cooperation” versus “competition.” Point out that the other team makes the game possible. Ask the players to brainstorm ways in which they might show respect to the other team. (Examples: saying positive comments to the other players, congratulating them for outstanding plays, and shaking hands at the conclusion of the game.)
2. Encourage the players to implement these ideas during the game. Conclude by providing an illustration of how one of your players demonstrated respect for the other team during the previous game.

Activity: Being a Star

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Have the players sit in a circle. Tell them 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:
“You work hard at practice, but the coach gives the position you want to a person who you think is not as good as you are. You would:
 - a. still attend practice, but not work as hard and fool around more

- b. point out the mistakes that the player who has your position makes so that you look better
 - c. discuss your skills with the coach and indicate that you would like to be considered for that position
 - d. quit; you won't play for anybody who fails to see your ability."
2. As you reread the options, ask the players to raise their hands if they would choose that particular option. Pause at each option and ask the players who chose that option to tell why they made that choice. If nobody chooses a particular option, ask the entire group why they didn't select that option.
3. Following the discussion, point out the importance of showing respect as a member of the team.

Activity: Who's Most Important?

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: Two cones

Description:

1. Place two cones about 10 yards apart in the team huddle area. Select two positions from your sport, one being a "glamour position" and the other being a "not-so-glamorous" position (quarterback/tackle, striker/defender, pitcher/right fielder, point guard/forward). Designate one cone for the quarterback, striker, pitcher, or point guard position and the second cone for the other position in your sport.
2. Ask the players to stand by the cone of the position they would like to play. Ask the players by each cone to tell why they chose that position. Next ask the players to stand by the cone of the position they feel is most important to the team. Tell them they can also stand between the cones if they feel both positions are equally important, or nearer to one cone or the other if they feel one may be a little more important than the other.
3. Ask the players to tell why they chose to stand where they did. If the players do not do so, point out the importance of both positions to the team and the importance of the players respecting their teammates in those positions.

Activity: Talking Ball

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: Ball

Description:

1. Ask the team to sit in a circle. Toss the ball to one of the players. Only the player holding the ball may speak. If it is the first practice session, ask the players to give their names, number of people in their families, number of pets, etc., to help players get acquainted with one another. At future practices and games, ask players how they felt about the game or tell about something they did during the past week to demonstrate caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.
2. Point out that the other players can show respect by keeping quiet while the person with the ball is speaking.

Activity: Mixer Day

Ages: 6-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Halfway through the season, schedule a mixer day. On this day, split up the teams and place players on teams with the players they have been playing against all season. This should give them new respect for their opponents during the remainder of the season.
2. At the end of the games, ask the coaches to talk with the players about respect and whether or not they feel differently about their opponents now that they have had a chance to play with them on the same team.

Activity: Strength Bombardment

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: Masking tape and one pencil for each player

Description:

1. Ask the players to stand in a circle. Point out that during the season the players have gotten to know each other pretty well. During the next few minutes, they are going to focus attention on what is good about each person on the team: their strengths.
2. Ask one player to stand in the center of the circle and supply each player with a small piece of masking tape and a pencil. Each person around the circle writes down a positive word or characteristic about the person standing in the center. The players then attach the tape to the player in the center of the circle. That person steps out and another player steps in. The process is repeated until everyone on the team (including the coach) has had a chance to be in the middle.

Activity: Secret Assignment

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect

Facility and Equipment: Equipment specific to your sport, chairs, 3x5 cards

Description:

1. Make up 3x5 cards ahead of time, each having a secret assignment on it. Gather the team together and share with them the idea that the entire team has been given a secret mission. As part of the mission, there are a variety of jobs that must be done. Each job is top secret, so the players cannot talk while carrying out their assignments unless their jobs instruct them to.
2. Give each player a card with an assignment on it similar to the following examples:
 - a. place all the folding chairs in a circle for a team meeting
 - b. fold all the chairs and place them out of the way
 - c. line up all the balls in a straight line
 - d. scatter the balls throughout the playing area
 - e. encourage everybody to work quietly

- f. encourage everybody to whistle while they work
 - g. tell everyone to wear their hats backwards (or inside out)
 - h. tell everyone to wear their uniform properly
3. After four to five minutes, call time out and ask all the players to come and sit on the floor in a circle. Ask them if they know what happened. (You may even want each player to read his assignment.) Then ask and discuss the following.
- a. Are there times when players on a team don't have the same assignment?
 - b. Is it helpful for team members to have different assignments?
 - c. How can we show respect for others when their tasks and our task is not the same?
 - d. Can you think of times when you have been given opposite messages? (An example might be an athlete who talks about fair play but then, exhibits unsportsmanlike conduct.)
4. Ask, "What does that do for your respect for that athlete? What is required of you to really have respect for someone?"

Activity: Describing Responsibility

Ages: All

Value(s): Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: Sheet of paper with the word "responsibility"

Description:

1. Hold up a sheet of paper with the word "responsibility." Tell the players it means something they should be. Ask the team what different players (quarterback, catcher, point guard, goalie, etc.) are responsible for.
2. If someone says something close to the right answer, say, "That's right. This person is responsible for calling the plays, signaling the pitch, making sure no one scores, etc. It is his or her 'job.' Every player has a responsibility on the field or court. We will practice so that you can do a good job with your responsibilities."
3. Say, "But we have responsibilities besides what we do in the game. To be sure that you understand what you are responsible for, the YMCA has some rules I want to share with you." At this time, cover any rules regarding practice, school attendance, equipment, uniforms, etc.

4. Say, "In addition to those responsibilities, I would like to add some more."
Add any responsibilities you want the players to understand. Keep the list short and state it as positively as possible. Responsibilities could include:
 - a. doing your best at all times
 - b. making sure all schoolwork gets done
 - c. helping with equipment
 - d. keeping the practice area clean

5. Conclude by asking the players why they think each of the responsibilities is important. After they have shared their answers for each responsibility, inform them that learning about responsibility is important. Being responsible will make them better players and better people. It is also important for the rest of the team.

Activity: Warm-up Exercises

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Point out that one of the ways the players can meet their responsibilities to the team is to lead warm-up exercises. Ask for volunteers and assign one player the responsibility of this task at each practice session and game. Be sure to give the players the option to pass and provide them with exercises they might use in leading the warm-up.

2. At the end of each practice and game, be sure to announce who is responsible for the warm-up session at the next practice or game. Following the warm-up session, congratulate the player for meeting his responsibility to the team.

Activity: Responsibility to the Team

Ages: All

Value(s): Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Say, "We have talked about responsibility and why it is important to you as a player and a person. What happens when people take care of the things they are responsible for? For example, what if our goalie (or other example) does what he is responsible for during the game?" Ask for responses.
2. Ask, "Who is helped when someone on the team does his or her job?" (The two probable answers are themselves and the team.) Say, "So you are responsible for yourself and to the team. It takes all of us to make our team successful. If we take care of the things that we are responsible for, it helps us and the team. We are good, responsible teammates."
3. Ask, "But what if somebody does not take care of his or her responsibilities? For instance, what if one player does not help set up the equipment?" (There is more work for others.) "What if a player does poorly in school and is unable to play?" (Our team is short a player.)
4. Ask, "What if our best player decides to skip the last three practices before the championship game? You know we need them to win the game. Would you let him play? I am going to count to three. When I say 'three,' if you want the person to play, hold your fist out with your thumb up. If you think the person should not play, hold your fist out with your thumb down." Demonstrate the process and then count to three. Count the votes and ask them why they voted as they did. If some voted yes, say, "I can understand why you want the person to play, but I would not let the person play for many reasons. First, it would not teach that person responsibility, which I think is important. Second, that person chose to violate a responsibility to themselves and the team, which is poor judgment, as we all agreed the last time. Third, I would rather have a responsible player who knew our plans because he had been at practice than a much more talented player I could not count on to be responsible to the team."
5. Say, "The good news is that you don't have to miss any games and let the team down, because you can choose to be responsible."

Activity: I'm Impressed

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: One penny and one piece of 1" x 1" foil for each player

Description:

1. After handing out a penny and piece of foil to each player, ask them to cover the penny with the foil. Holding the foil in place, have them rub the top of the foil firmly with their finger or fingernail. (The impression of the penny will be formed on the foil.)
2. Explain in your own words that this is the way it is with people. How we act on and off the playing field rubs off on those around us. It is our responsibility to leave the best impression that we can.
3. Follow your comments with a quick illustration as to how one of your players has modeled being responsible by impacting others. Conclude by pointing out that the impression Abraham Lincoln made on the foil will soon be thrown away, but the impact they make on each other can last a lifetime.

Activity: Our Goals and Expectations (use at first or second practice)

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Have the players sit in a circle. Tell them you would like to talk about some of the things they have thought about before the start of this sport season. Tell them you will read several incomplete sentences and give each of them a chance to complete each one. After each player has had a chance to complete the first sentence, move on to the second sentence.
 - a. When I found out that I was going to be on this team, I felt...
 - b. My family told me playing this sport was going to be...
 - c. Before I came today, I was feeling...
 - d. One way I think I can help this team is...
 - e. Something I like about this sport is...
 - f. One thing I think we should do as a team is...
 - g. Two things I will do to be sure I am ready for the games are...
 - h. You can count on me to...
2. You may want to go back to any unfinished sentence for further discussion. Take time to talk about responsibility and clarify expectations you have of team members. Refer to their statements related to "you can count on me..."

and tell them you will be watching to see if they follow through as they promised.

Activity: Parts is Parts

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. With the team sitting in a circle, read the following passage of Scripture from 1 Corinthians 12:14.
“For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members everyone of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. If they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, but one body.”
2. Ask the following questions for general discussion:
 - a. “What do you think these verses mean?”
 - b. “How do you think they apply to your team?”
 - c. “Is the player making the assist as important as the person who scores?”
 - d. “Is someone on the bench as important as someone on the field?”
 - e. “What are the responsibilities of each position and player on your team?”
 - f. “What happens when these responsibilities are not carried out?”
3. Talk about the importance of all players accepting their responsibilities. Conclude by providing an illustration of how one of your players has demonstrated responsibility during a recent practice or game.

Activity: Always on Time

Ages: All

Value(s): Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Discuss the importance of being on time for practices and games. Point out that being on time is part of their responsibility to the team. Ask the team to identify ways to reward players who are always on-time for practices and games. (Examples: those players get to lead warm-ups, design the next practice session, receive decals for their uniforms, etc.)
2. Implement a few of the ideas the players suggest and reward those players who are always on time for practices and games.

Activity: One For All/All For One

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Ask your team to form a tight circle facing the back of the player to their right. On the count of three, ask all players to sit down slowly at the same time so that they are sitting on the lap of the person behind them while forming a circle. If the players follow your instructions, this should be an easy task to accomplish.
2. If you have time, have them do the exercise faster and then in a series, by just giving commands of up and down.
3. Explain in your own words that this is the way it is with people. If we are responsible and follow valid directions from a leader, much can be accomplished. If one of us fails to listen and does not accept the responsibility to follow instructions, many individuals may be affected negatively.
4. Conclude with a quick illustration of how one of your players has modeled being responsible in following instructions and how it has impacted others in a positive way. Congratulate the group on their success in performing the activity.

Activity: Introduction to the Four Values

Ages: All

Value(s): Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Ask the players to help you describe a good athlete. They can use one word, like “fast,” or a phrase, like “knows the rules.” Try to get every player and coach to give at least one response. After many responses say, “That would certainly describe a good athlete. You could call those things ‘qualities’ of a good athlete. We could also think of ‘qualities’ of a good person. This year, we want to emphasize four of those qualities: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. I think those four are also qualities of a good athlete and somebody I would like to have on our team, don’t you?”
2. Say, “You should notice most of the things we said about a good athlete are things everyone can improve on. We can all get faster with practice and learn more about the rules. We’ll work on these during practice. The same is true of the four qualities of a good person. We can all be more caring, honesty, respectful and responsible. Each week, we will spend time talking about these qualities and how they can help us be better athletes, team members, and people.”

Activity: Sports Legends

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: Sport legends books or articles

Description:

1. Bring a book or article about an outstanding athlete, amateur or professional, who has set a good example by demonstrating one or more of the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

2. The books or articles should include past and present athletes. Be prepared to talk for five to seven minutes about the values the athletes have exhibited and how the values have benefited them in their respective sports.
3. Invite a local high school or collegiate athlete to attend a game or practice session and talk about how the values have enabled him or her to make the right decisions as he or she has participated in the sport.

Activity: Character Emblems

Ages: 6-14

Value(s): Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: Character emblems (one of each value for each member of the team)

Description:

1. Whenever a player exhibits one of the values during a practice or game, provide that individual with the emblem to sew on the team shirt or shorts. Be sure to tell the team what the player did to deserve that emblem.
2. At the end of the season, recognize those individuals who have received all four emblems by posting their pictures in the YMCA lobby or highlighting their accomplishments in the YMCA newsletter.

Activity: Values Tag

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: Color-coded decals for each of the values

Description:

1. Give each player a decal that represents one of the four values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Ask the players to form a group with the other people on their team who have the same value that they do. Ask them to talk briefly about that value and discuss how they have demonstrated it during the past week.

2. Ask the players to form groups so that there are four people with four different values in each group. Ask them again to talk about the values and explain how they have demonstrated them during the past week.

Activity: Equipment Inventory

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: Team equipment

Description:

1. Each team is issued a bag of equipment and supplies for the season. One player is assigned the responsibility for distributing the equipment at the beginning of each practice and game and then collecting it at the end of the practice or game and returning it to the coach.
2. The coach should praise the players for being responsible and showing respect for the YMCA property.

Activity: Team Slogan

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: Paper, pencils

Description:

1. Inform the team that they will focus on four values this season: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Divide the team into groups of threes. Give each group a sheet of paper and pencil.
2. Assign each group one of the four values and ask them to design a campaign slogan for your team related to that value. It could be a radio, TV, or newspaper ad, billboard, jingle, poster, etc.

3. You might want to offer some hints on advertising such as: the fewer words the better, a one-verse song, a “catchy” tune, or attractive display. After 10 minutes, ask the groups to present their slogans. Several options are available with the slogans.
 - a. choose one for the team for the season
 - b. use a different one each week
 - c. make T-shirts from one slogan
 - d. hang a poster in the YMCA

4. Be sure to conclude by discussing the importance of the four values to the team.

Activity: A Tough Circle

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. Divide the players into three groups. Tell them that you are going to read them a story. “Let’s assume that you are the coach of a team. You have a pretty good group of players in terms of talent. But you are concerned about two kids that both play the same position.
“Harry does well in practice...when he attends, but he only makes one practice out of three. Jerry, on the other hand, never misses practice, but does not perform quite as well as Harry. Who would you select to start the opening game?”

2. Ask each group to discuss all the things they could do as a coach. Ask each group to share with the total team the options they think are available to the coach. Next, have the groups discuss the consequences of each option in terms of the values of respect and responsibility and report back to the total team.

3. Be sure to emphasize the importance of the coach making decisions that are consistent with the values of respect and responsibility.

Activity: The Big Four

Ages: 8-14

Value(s): Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility

Facility and Equipment: None

Description:

1. The purpose of this strategy is to introduce the team to the four values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Ask the players to sit in a circle. Begin by asking them to think of an individual who demonstrates the value of caring. Ask a few players to tell who they have identified as caring individuals and why.
2. After the players have talked about caring people, ask them to identify people who demonstrate the values of honesty, then respect, and finally, responsibility. For each value, have a few players share their thoughts with the total team.
3. Conclude by pointing out that the team will focus on these values during the season, and that efforts will be made to help players learn more about these values and how they can apply them to their lives.