

Sample Curriculum for Students

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A Higher Standard for Athletics

Teaching Curriculum - Building a Team Culture

Introduction

With athletics as a laboratory, young athletes occupy a unique position to learn important life lessons from their coach. The crucible of athletics reveals much about character. The coach has the distinctive viewpoint to see young people in a different light as they interact with both teammates and opponents. Athletics is one of the best environments for young people to learn how to deal with both adversity and success. Teamwork, cooperation, effort, respect for authority, humility, are but a few of the myriad of lessons that are presented in this atmosphere of sports competition. This curriculum is designed to give the servant-leader coach the information needed to utilize these learning situations and teach young athletes to confront the challenges that life offers. Maybe this is why the great evangelist, Billy Graham said, "A coach can do more in one year than any person in American can do in a lifetime." We urge you to take advantage of this rich opportunity to learn about these valuable life issues.

Preparation constitutes the principal part of the coach's job responsibilities and preparing players for the game of life is their ultimate responsibility. Coaching from the inside-out is the philosophy of A Higher Standard than Winning. For this reason, we have developed this flexible curriculum to help every coach as they teach the lessons that are most important—those that help us to be better people. The information imbedded in this curriculum is very important to teach to young athletes, remembering that they are at a very impressionable time in their lives. The Higher Standard inspires coaches to teach their players as if they are family. In this class, we desire for everyone to feel like a family, comfortable and unafraid to ask honest questions.

One piece of advice to each young person in this class during this time is that during these school years, each is assimilating their personal views on life. This is an awesome opportunity to develop critical thinking about vital principles of life. We have developed this curriculum to address the crucial issues that young people face during this formative period in their lives. By following the principles herein, players and coaches can engage in an important conversation to help develop a Christian world view.

While studying these lessons, please feel free to engage in discussion. If the class is hesitant to discuss, the teacher will call on someone and wait until they respond. We urge all players to use this time to discuss pros and cons of all issues presented. The curriculum consists of 36 lessons which are designed to be taught in approximately 30-45 minutes each. We have developed enough supplemental information in the teacher's edition of this curriculum to extend each

lesson to a full week if so desired, making the curriculum a year-long course if that is appropriate. Remember that discussion is the heart of learning these life lessons. Smaller groups provoke more discussion, so if needed feel free to subdivide the groups to get this accomplished. Devise a method to create lively discussion. Do not condemn any comments from classmates, but feel free to present all viewpoints without fear of criticism. In the discussion atmosphere, it is necessary that only one person speaks at a time. Encourage more than one person to answer each question and allow discussion until the chatter begins to wane, even if you do not finish the lesson—you can finish it at the next session. Your teacher will use the Socratic Method to stimulate discussion – answering a question with another question. Making the session a give-and-take will allow everyone to learn much about their beliefs.

These lessons are designed for once-a-week discussion but can be utilized any way you want—daily if you choose. The teacher will have as much flexibility as desired to go through the lessons. Christian coaches leading the discussions are more effective than outside speakers. Discussions enable the coach to understand the issues that are relevant in players' lives and help to make the coach aware of their thoughts and beliefs. The freedom to ask teachers or coaches honestly is essential. Without internal and honest discussions, the coach will not know his/her players in a personal manner. It builds trust (which is the foundation of teamwork) to have team meetings of this nature. Be sure to review the lesson prior to class each time and have any materials, boards, or hand-outs that you feel are necessary.

A teacher's edition is included with these materials that contains enough supplemental information to lengthen the course to five days a week for an entire school year.

Team Culture

One major purpose of this curriculum is to provide a framework for the leaders of the team to build a team culture. Leaders agree that the culture of an organization is the driving force for success but are often ambiguous when asked to define it. Even though culture is the foundation of an organization, it remains an abstract term. Organizational culture is generally understood as a company's beliefs, values, rules, norms, traditions, expectations, symbols, customs, and attitudes. The combination of these shared qualities is what makes each organization unique. Every culture has its own recipe, and even though the mix of elements is similar, the culture remains unique—it is the distinction of the organization that separates it from other teams, even though both may seek the same purpose. Culture is your personal way of doing things and it belongs to each group exclusively.

The culture of the team is a product of the people on the team. Our emphasis is not on things but rather people. People and relationships are the driving force behind success—not catchy slogans or charismatic leaders. An atmosphere that values each member’s input and encourages everyone to do their best without condemnation is a launching pad that empowers everyone to strive for excellence. A good culture is a place where everyone loves and trusts their teammates. A healthy culture discourages jealousies or pettiness—but rather, builds a group that promotes the successes of others. Culture resembles a loving family where differences are reconciled with mutual respect and understanding. Arguments do not involve other members but are solved with the wisdom and discretion that servant-leadership produces.

Viewing teammates through the lens of a servant-leader is the aim of these lessons. Research links servant-leader coaching principles with increased motivation. Young people respond very positively to the servant-leader coach who bases his/her authority on trust. The teacher’s edition contains data on servant-leader coaching...become familiar with this before beginning this curriculum.

Journaling and Notes

The workbook includes sections for student notes. In these sections, we encourage all students to make a record of the teacher’s comments. Notes should resemble bullet points as the teacher speaks. Along with space for notes, the student will find sections for journaling. In these journaling spots, we encourage all students to record their thoughts as the lesson unfolds. The journal can include personal information about what is happening on the team to serve as a time capsule for each team member as they reflect on their days in school sports. Journal comments to personalize their sports career will become more valuable with time as each athlete reviews their former days in sports—some of the best days of their lives. Funny experiences, accomplishments/disappointments, and remembrances will enrich the workbook and increase the vintage of this document through the passage of time. One day many years hence, we will look back on these days and have a journal to remind us of these precious memories. So, remember—Notes for teacher comments, journal for student thoughts.

Lesson #1 – Teamwork

Renowned coach, Lou Holtz, had the following team rules.

- Rule #1 – the team comes first.
- Rule #2 – if there is ever any question, refer to Rule #1.

The heart of teamwork is putting your personal interests behind the interests of the team. The team truly comes first. We are created to interact and fellowship with other people. Togetherness provides the greatest memories of our athletic careers. Twenty years after your athletic career concludes, you will remember the triumphs and the defeats...but what you will cherish are the memories of your teammates and how you faced the crucible of competition standing side-by-side with your friends. Memories of wins and losses wane with time, but the friendships that were forged on the playing field remain.

Coach Mike Krzyzewski, former men's basketball coach at Duke University developed a powerful symbol to represent teamwork. Five fingers wrapped into a clenched fist is the analogy that "Coach K" uses as a tool to symbolize teamwork. The five fingers represent the five elements of teamwork on the Duke University basketball squad: trust, communication, collective responsibility, caring, and pride. Every time you see his team holding this clenched fist, it is the team's way of communicating to each other the importance of teamwork.

Biblical principles. Read and discuss.

- **Ecclesiastes 4:9** - "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor; if either of them falls down, one can help the other up."
- **I Corinthians 12:26** – "And if one member suffers, all the parts share the suffering; if one member is honored, all rejoice in it."
- **Proverbs 27:17** – "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."
- **I Peter 4:10** – "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's grace."
- **Galatians 6:2** – "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Many other verses exist that teach the value of teamwork. In fact, the principle of teamwork is throughout the Bible. Jesus selected a team of twelve to help during his ministry. Jesus built a team to accomplish His mission on earth. If teamwork works for Jesus, who are we to object?

One of the most eloquent and moving speeches ever given by an athlete was during Emmett Smith's induction into the National Football Hall of Fame. During his acceptance speech, Emmett Smith told Daryl "Moose" Johnson, "Without you there is no me." He recognized the importance of the teammate who blocked for him rather than taking credit for his success. Teamwork means that we need other people to help us reach our maximum potential. During this acceptance

speech into the HOF, on a day that was his, Smith chose to give credit to everyone but himself, citing his coaches, teammates, and family as the reason for his success. He understood the importance of teamwork. The idea of teamwork is to always support your teammates with words of affirmation, encouragement, and advice. By pouring your help into others, it makes them stronger and gives you a feeling of fulfillment. Emmett Smith realized that his success as a running back was determined by the efforts of his teammates. The better they performed, the more yards he was able to gain. Remember his words, "without you there is no me."

Thoughts on teamwork:

- **Booker T. Washington** – "If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else."
- **Branch Rickey** – "Don't worry about your individual numbers. Worry about the team. If the team is successful, each of you will be successful too."
- **Phil Jackson** – "The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each individual member is the team."
- **Michael Jordan**- "Talent wins games, but teamwork wins championships."
- **Harry Truman** – "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."

Discussion Activities:

1. What other scripture references can you find besides the ones listed here that stress teamwork?
2. Can you think of some ways to encourage teamwork?
3. Have you ever had a coach or teammate explain their definition or an example of teamwork? If so, share it with us.
4. Can you mention an act of teamwork by someone on your team?
5. How would you define teamwork?

Case Study #1

Your team just won the big game. The news media is present and selects you to interview. They ask you this question, "Tell us who is responsible for this big win?" What bullet points should you mention when your team wins the big game? Can you remember an example of an interview where the interviewee sounded selfish? Can you remember an example of an interview where the interviewee gave credit to others? How did he/she do this?

Assignment

You are elected to a Hall of Fame like Emmett Smith. On the day of your induction, you will give your acceptance speech. What do you say? Write the bullet points of the speech which should last five minutes. Who will you thank? What does this honor mean to you?

Lesson #2 – Your Teammate’s Emotional Tank

“Am I my brother’s keeper?!” This was Cain’s response to the question from God. Cain had just murdered his brother in a jealous rage because he believed that God favored Abel over him. Cain’s angry response was to this simple question, “Where is Abel?” These infamous words are forever remembered as the unapologetic reply from a vicious murderer. Cain is forever enshrined –not in the Hall of Fame—but the Hall of Infamy for these words.

We do not murder our teammates physically, but we sometimes do murder their reputation with jealous words. Strong teams agree to an unwritten contract that obliges them to fill the emotional tanks of their teammates. Each member is responsible for making the player beside them better because of their presence. The Positive Coaches Alliance teaches that you can fill each other’s Emotional Tanks by noticing people who help you or the team and thanking them for it. (PCA, 2020) You can also fill Emotional Tanks by cheering for your teammates, giving them high-fives, smiling at them, and telling them you are glad they are on the team. Authentic words and acts of affirmation are important to build a positive team culture. This is every teammate’s responsibility. You truly Are Your Brother’s (Sister’s) keeper!

Positive Coaching Alliance has wise advice regarding how to fill a teammate’s emotional tank. Research shows that optimal performance occurs when people receive five pieces of positive feedback (tank fillers) to every 1 criticism (tank drainer). This is called the Magic **(5:1)** Ratio. It is especially important that these positive words are not false flattery but rather acknowledging a good effort or good play. (Positive coach.org) You are your brother’s keeper in the sense that he/she needs your input into their lives. Your positive feedback fills their emotional tanks and motivates them to give their best effort in the crucible of competition. Being a good teammate requires you to fill your teammates’ emotional tank.

Biblical principles. Read and discuss.

- **Romans 14:19** - “Therefore, let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify (build up) another.”
- **I Corinthians 10:24** – “Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.”
- **Philippians 2:3-4** – “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
- **Ephesians 4:2** – “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.”
- **I Thessalonians 5:11** – “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

Thoughts on Teamwork

- **Nick Saban** – “You can’t win together if you don’t work together.”
- **Tom Landry** – “There is a misconception about teamwork. Teamwork is the ability to have different thoughts about things; it is the ability to argue and stand up and say loud and strongly what you feel. But in the end, it is also the ability to adjust to what is best for the team.”
- **Pat Summitt** – “Teamwork is what makes common people capable of uncommon results.”
- **Matthew Stover** – “If you take out team in teamwork, it is just work.”
- **Pat Riley** – “Great teamwork is the only way we create the breakthroughs that define our careers.”

Discussion Activities:

1. When one of your teammates has a good game, how can you recognize them to fill their emotional tanks?
2. When one of your teammates has a bad game or practice, how can you recognize them to fill their emotional tanks?
3. Do you have an obligation to speak truthfully to a teammate if he/she is not giving their best effort?
4. Can you remember when one of your teammates was able to fill your emotional tank? How did this make you feel?
5. Can you remember a time when something your coach did or said filled your emotional tank? How did this make you feel? Did it increase your motivation?

Team Activity: Positive Charting

Positive Charting is a method for increasing the number of “right things” that your teammate does. This should be a collaborative project between players and coach. It creates a wonderful positive culture in which players are more receptive to corrections by the coach because they feel appreciated. Can you write a positive chart for your team based on your last game/practice?

Case Study #1

One member of your football team (John) is normally a very dependable player; but on the night of the big game, he played poorly. The team won the big game despite his poor performance, but one of his teammates (Bill) played his best game ever. Most nights, John received adulation, but on this night, Bill was the hero. What should John say to Bill to fill his emotional tank? What words should Bill say to John? What do you as a teammate say about the game?

