



NCSL Basketball Devotional Handbook

"For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

1 Timothy 4:8

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Introduction

It's no secret young people of today face a much different world than the one in which we grew up. The pressure they are under is tremendous. Crime rates are as high as ever. The world message is do whatever it takes to get ahead, even if it means cheating, lying, stealing, or even killing! No one wants to talk about it, but it's the truth. Scandal, disrespect, compromise, and one person hurting another is everywhere you turn.

Kids need sound spiritual, moral, and ethical leadership. They must have a clear understanding of honesty, respect, obedience, love, and other foundational truths that will help them stand strong in a world that more and more often is choosing wrong over right and evil over good.

Most of the kids in our league regularly attend church, while others may attend occasionally or not at all. The several hours each week that a child spends in church cannot compete with the dozens of hours they spend at school, watching television, playing video games, listening to music, at the mall, or engaging in a host of other activities. This includes much time out and about in a world that doesn't know, or refuses to recognize, Jesus Christ. They learn one thing from the Sunday school teacher, then they must live and play in an environment which promotes just the opposite. This can be quite confusing to a child, as to anyone, who is instructed in the right way, but constantly observes that which is wrong.

If we are a Christian Nation why do we have so many problems? Is honesty no longer applauded? Is respect no longer respectable? Has integrity been buried? Is character a forgotten hero?

Northwest Christian Sports League doesn't think so! We are dedicated to the families, and more specifically, the children of our community. It's time to stand up for what we believe, to revive character and honor, in order to foster a group of young people who will be respectful, obedient, courageous, and well meaning family members and citizens. Being a Christian is the greatest life there is, a life of integrity, honesty, commitment, forgiveness, grace and love. If we not only teach with words, but live out by example, the principles outlined in the Bible, we can effectively impact the lives of children and their families, starting with our own. The Word of God has much to say about the principles, traits, and characteristics previously mentioned.

You, as the Coach, have an awesome responsibility! Your players trust and rely upon you to show them what is right, not only on the field, but with life in general. Your words and actions are precious to them. God has placed you in this position because He has equipped you for the task. Your knowledge and love of sports is secondary to the real reason you have been chosen. You are called to live and share the love and message of our Lord Jesus Christ with a lost and dying world. Take this responsibility seriously and rise to the calling. You can do it!

The lessons in the Northwest Christian Sports League Devotional Handbook are designed to help you share with your players (and their parents) many traits, characteristics and guiding principles that will help them to live a life of excellent moral and ethical standards. In a world that says "there are no absolutes" and "if it feels good, do it", you can let them know there is a more honorable way. The lessons are simple, easily adapted to the age group you are coaching, and take only 5 to 10 minutes from each practice. It is our hope that many good conversations are generated and that the kids walk away with knowledge and wisdom that will have a long-lasting effect.

Please Note: Sports League leadership is here to assist you in any way necessary. Do not hesitate to ask. If you need help in presenting lessons or just some encouragement or tips, please call us at (425) 743-3067 and leave a message or send an email to office@ncsl.cc. We will get back to you in a timely manner.

Lesson Format

Prepare by studying the lessons well before presenting them. Pray and expect God to perform miracles because of His faithfulness, your obedience, and the needs of your players and their families.

Lessons will be taught as a part of every practice. If you have 2 practices per week teach 2 different lessons that week. After you have taught each lesson once, use the remaining practices to go through the lessons a second time. Repetition is one of the keys to remembering. This is also a good opportunity to review what your players retained from the first time it was taught.

Teaching lessons is not an option. They are a responsibility and duty of the Coach.

The following format is used in the presentation of each lesson:

- 1) **Game Plan**
The main teaching, emphasis, trait or characteristic of the lesson.
- 2) **Warm-Up**
The opening question and definition of the main teaching, emphasis, trait or characteristic of the lesson.
- 3) **Tip-Off**
A Scripture, quote or saying intended to cause your players to think about and consider its meaning. This will center on the teaching, emphasis, trait or characteristic of the lesson taken.
- 4) **Time Out**
Ask your players what the scripture, quote or saying means to them. Remember, there are no wrong answers because they are telling you what they believe it means.
- 5) **Slam Dunk**
A rewording of the scripture, quote or saying by the devotional editor in such a way that all players will clearly understand.
- 6) **Pass or Shoot**
Just as a basketball player handling the ball has to choose whether to pass or shoot, your players will have a choice as to how they will respond to the teaching, emphasis, trait or characteristic. This section of the lesson is worded in a way as to make the players realize they have a choice. This will make it clear to the players that they have a responsibility, ownership of their own actions, in every life situation they encounter. This may also include a life application such as an incident that may occur at home, school, or with friends.
- 7) **Substitution**
An initial or additional Scripture that deals with the main teaching, emphasis, trait or characteristic. In basketball, a coach puts in a substitution when someone else is tired, weak, or can't get the job done. In this same manner, God knew that we could not atone for our sins, so He sent Christ, God in the flesh, to die for us.
- 8) **The Final Whistle**
Closing prayer that will center on the main teaching, emphasis, characteristic or trait and ask God to help the players to maintain a high standard for their lives. Ask God to help the players to stand strong and make right decisions. You can also ask the players if they have any special requests or needs to bring to the Lord during prayer.

Lesson 1: Obedience

Game Plan

That players will gain an understanding of what it means to be obedient.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does it mean to obey?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

To follow the wishes, instructions, orders, or commands of someone or something; to respond quickly.

Tip-Off

"Obey now, play later, disobey now, pay later."

Time Out

Ask your players what the saying above means to them.

Slam Dunk

The saying means if you do as you are asked right away, with a good attitude, and get it done right, you will be able to play as soon as you are done. If you argue, have a wrong attitude, or disobey and don't do as you are asked you will have to pay for disobeying by not being able to play at all. True obedience is more than just doing as you are asked, it means doing it with a right attitude.

Pass or Shoot

Obedying is a choice. Only you can really decide if you are going to obey or not. if you obey and do what is right, you will be a blessing to your family, have many friends, and be well-liked. Life at home will be more fun because you are being a part of the team that is needed to make a family work well. When you're young it seems like someone is always asking or telling you to do something. When you get older you will understand that this is to help you become responsible and because everyone needs to help out by doing their part. Choose to obey so when you grow up you will be a responsible person when it becomes your turn to lead people.

Substitution

Children, obey your parents the way the Lord wants. This is the right thing to do. The command says, "Honor your mother and father." This is the first commandment that has a promise with it. The promise is, "Then everything will be well with you, and you will have a long life on earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help your players to serve as examples of children who are obedient, that they would do as they are asked, do it quickly, and with a good attitude.

Lesson 2: Respect, Courtesy

Game Plan

That players will understand what it means to respect someone or something.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does it mean to respect someone or something?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

To show proper courtesy, honor, or recognition to someone; to be polite or kind.

Tip-Off

"Respect costs nothing, but it buys things that are worth much."

Time Out

Ask your players what the above saying means to them.

Slam Dunk

The saying means that respect is something you cannot buy. Respect is free, it comes from the heart, but is acted out by what we say and do. Although it costs nothing, respect toward others will get you many things. Respecting others begins with having respect for yourself, by liking who you are. Isn't it hard to respect someone or something you don't like? When you show respect to others they will show respect to you. Everyone needs to be respected.

Pass or Shoot

Respect is a choice. No one can make you respect yourself or someone else. You should have respect for everyone, but especially for your parents and other adults. Talking back, making faces, saying mean things, laughing or embarrassing someone else, or making fun of handicapped or old people, are just a few ways of being disrespectful. Remember, it is your choice whether or not to show respect. You will be blessed if you choose to be respectful. Choose to have respect for everyone.

Substitution

Show respect for all people. Love the brothers and sisters of God's family. Respect God. Honor the king. (1 Peter 2:17)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help you and your players to have respect for everyone. Ask that they would be blessed as a result of their choice to respect God and others.

Lesson 3: Love

Game Plan

That players will understand what it means to show and practice love.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does it mean to love someone or something?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

To have affection for; to like very much; to really care about someone or something.

Tip-Off

"What a nice world this would be if we loved others as we love ourselves."

Time Out

Ask your players what the saying above means to them.

Slam Dunk

The saying means that the world we live in would be much better, and kinder, if we would learn to love others as much as we love ourselves. We need to care about the feelings and well-being of our family, neighbors, friends, and even strangers, like we care about our own. We would never think about hurting ourselves or calling ourselves names. In the same way, we should not hurt others or call them names. Another way of showing love is taking good care of things that you own, borrow, or use.

Pass or Shoot

Love is a choice. No one can make you love them, just as nothing can make you take good care of it. Only you can decide if you are going to love or not. People who love others and take good care of things are always respected and liked. They are considered to be responsible and earn the trust of others. Saying nice things, hugs and kisses for Mom and Dad, doing your chores, praying for your family and friends, or taking good care of your pets and other things you have are all ways of showing love.

Substitution

(Jesus speaking) "I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you. All people will know you are my followers if you love each other." (John 13:34,35)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help your players to show and practice love toward others. Remind them that Jesus showed His love for them by dying on the cross. Ask that they would be soft-hearted and caring.

Lesson 4: Giving

Game Plan

That players will gain an understanding of what it means to be giving.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does it mean to give?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

To present voluntarily and without expecting something in return.

Tip-Off

"Not what you get, but what you give, determines the worth of the life you live."

(For the 4-6 year old players, you may need to word this a little simpler.)

Time Out

Ask your players what the above saying means.

Slam Dunk

The saying means that although the things that we own tell people a lot about who we are, our true worth is in what we give to others. Simply put, we are measured by what we give away. Some may have a nice car, a big house, or even a lot of money in the bank, but that does not always mean their life has been lived in a worthy manner. God wants us to be sure and have balance in our lives. It is not wrong to own things, but if we own a lot of things and don't give to God, the church, and other people, then we are not doing the right thing.

Pass or Shoot

Giving is a choice. No one can make you be someone who gives because it has to come from our heart. If you choose to give, you must be careful not to give because you expect to get something in return. You should give just because you want to give and do it happily. Sharing toys, food, candy, money, your time, and other things is a way of giving that you can practice every day. Choose to be a giver and someone who shares what you have with others.

Substitution

"Do not forget to do good to others. And share with them what you have." (Hebrews 13:16)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help your players to be people who give to God and others. Ask that He would show them different ways of giving and that they would give with a happy heart.

Lesson 5: Teamwork, Unity

Game Plan

That players will understand the benefits of teamwork and working together.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does teamwork mean?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

Effort on the part of a group of persons acting together as a team working for a common cause or goal.

Tip-Off

"There is no 'I' in teamwork."

Time Out

Ask your players what the above saying means.

Slam Dunk

The saying means that there should be no selfishness, or thinking only about what you want, if you are part of a team. Your goal should be to become the best player you can, and in this way, you will become a team member that is worth a lot. You should try to be a player who places other teammates before yourself, helps and listens to the Coach, and who says nice things to your fellow players, even when they make a mistake. You should do your best to win and lose as a team.

Pass or Shoot

Teamwork is a choice on the part of each of you, and only you can choose to be a good teammate. No team can win without teamwork, where each player plays their own position. You can be a real good player, but not be a good teammate. If you are a good player, let the way you play the game speak for itself. Don't tell players how good you are by bragging about yourself, or get on other players' when they make a mistake. Let others brag about you. In this way, others will like you and consider you a good teammate. The game is more fun when everyone does their part.

Substitution

"If each part of the body were the same part, there would be no body. But truly God put the parts in the body as he wanted them. And so there are many parts, but only one body." (1 Corinthians 12:18-20)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help your players to practice teamwork. Ask that they would understand that even as God made body parts that have a different job, He has also made each of them different and special as a part of the team.

Lesson 6: Self-Control

Game Plan

That players will understand the benefits of self-control and controlling their tempers.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does it mean to have self-control?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

Control of your own actions or feelings; restraint.

Tip-Off

A person who does not control himself is like a city whose walls have been broken down. (Proverbs 25:28)

Time Out

Ask your players what the above scripture means.

Slam Dunk

The scripture means that when you do not practice self-control you will be like a city back in Bible times whose wall had been broken down. Walls were a city's best defense against their enemies and if the wall was broken down it would open them to be attacked. In the same way if you are not careful in what you say and do, it's like tearing your own wall of protection down and opening yourself to be attacked by others.

Pass or Shoot

Self-control, which is controlling what you say and do, is a choice. Only you can choose to control what you do or how you respond. If someone says or does something that hurts you or makes you mad, you may feel like yelling, saying something mean, or even hurting them. Instead, you can choose to control your feelings and respond in love. This is not easy, especially when you are hurt really bad, but it is the best choice to make. You will win many friends and be respected if you practice self-control.

Substitution

"So prepare your minds for service and have self-control. All your hope should be for the gift of grace that will be yours when Jesus Christ comes again." (1 Peter 1:13)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help your players to practice self-control. Ask that they would be humble when winning, encouraged when losing, and would be a team that earns the respect of other teams because of the example they set in this area.

Lesson 7: Honesty, Truthfulness

Game Plan

That players will understand the benefits of being Honest and truthful.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, 'What does it mean to be honest and truthful?'

Give you players the dictionary's definition:

Honorable in principles, intentions, and actions; to not lie, cheat, or steal; respectable, having a good reputation.

Tip-Off

"One of the good things about telling the truth is you don't have to remember what you said."

Time Out

Ask your players what the above saying means.

Slam Dunk

The saying means exactly what it says. If you tell the truth, you won't have to remember what you told the last person, or the person before, because you have been honest in what you have said. It will be easy to tell the story or event again because you will be passing on exactly the way the story or event really happened.

Pass or Shoot

Honesty and truthfulness are a choice. You know if you are telling the truth or not if you make something up or lie to make a story or something that happened more exciting. It will be hard to remember how you told the story last. The truth will always come out, and if you have told lies or changed certain things from the way in which they really happened, you will lose the trust of others and it will be hard for them to believe you the next time. It is hard for us to feel good when we aren't honest with people and God. Choose to be honest and truthful.

Substitution

"The truth will last forever. But lies last only a moment." (Proverbs 12:19)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help your players to be honest and truthful in all things. Ask that they would understand, as the scripture says, that lies will quickly be found out, but the truth will last forever. The truth will bring them honor and trust. God is a lover of the truth.

Lesson 8: Helping

Game Plan

That players will understand the benefits of and joy that comes from helping.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does it mean to help someone?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

To give aid or be of service to; to assist or support someone or something.

Tip-Off

"Help everyone you can. Helping someone today means you'll be helped tomorrow."

Time Out

Ask your players what the above saying means.

Slam Dunk

The saying means that you should do your best to help anyone who has a need. By helping someone today, you can be sure that when you have a need that someone will be there to help you. When you help someone else you are actually helping yourself.

Pass or Shoot

Helping others is always a choice. If you choose to help others, not only will you feel better, but you will receive help in your time of need. Your help will not always come from the person you helped, but through someone that the Lord has placed in a position to help you. You can live your life and not help others, but when you need help it will be hard to find someone to help you. Helping others will gain you respect and result in your having many friends. Also always remember how blessed you are to be able to help others. There are many who cannot. Ask your players, "Can you name some people you should help?"

Substitution

(The Apostle Paul speaking) "I showed you in all things that you should work as I did and help the weak. I taught you to remember the words of Jesus. He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help your players to always be willing to help others. Pray that the Lord would provide them with many chances to help people in need and that they would be good helpers to their parents, brothers and sisters, friends and others they know.

Lesson 9: Kindness

Game Plan

That players will gain an understanding of what it means to practice kindness.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does it mean to be kind?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

Good-natured; compassionate; considerate or helpful; mild or gentle; affectionate.

Tip-Off

"People will overlook the mistakes of anyone who is kind."

Time Out

Ask your players what the above saying means to them.

Slam Dunk

The saying means just as it says, that people will overlook or forgive the faults or mistakes that a kind person makes. It is easy to forgive the wrong things that a kind person does because you will always be able to remember something good that they have done. Kind people rarely hurt someone or do something wrong on purpose; it is usually by accident. The opposite of a kind person would be someone who is mean. It is much more difficult to forgive the wrong actions of a mean person.

Pass or Shoot

Kindness is a choice. You are the only one that can make up your mind to be kind to people. If you choose to be a kind person, it will be very easy for people to forgive you when you do something wrong or hurtful. If you are mean it is hard for people to forget about the things you do because they will only remember all the times you have done mean things, and they may even think you do them on purpose. Kind people are respected, trusted and loved. Choose to be kind to others. Ask your players, "Can you name ways in which you can treat others with kindness?"

Substitution

"God has chosen you and made you His holy people. He loves you. So always do these things. Show mercy to others; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient." (Colossians 3:12)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord that your players would practice kindness toward others. Ask that when they do wrong things, that those mistakes will be forgiven because people will remember in the past that they have always tried to do what was right.

Lesson 10: Forgiveness

Game Plan

That players will gain an understanding of what it means to forgive.

Warm-Up

Ask your players, "What does it mean to forgive?"

Give your players the dictionary's definition:

To pardon; to remember no more; to allow someone to recover from a mistake.

Tip-Off

"We should forgive and then forget what we have forgiven."

Time Out

Ask your players what the saying above means to them.

Slam Dunk

The saying means, first of all that we should forgive everyone who hurts us, and in doing so, try also to forget the very thing we have forgiven them of. All of us will be hurt by people, sometimes each day. Mean or angry words, a broken promise, or a lot of other things may happen which can hurt us. Still, we must forgive. Forgiving, if practiced right, means not remembering what someone did wrong. If you forgive others, when it is your time to be forgiven, it will be easier for them to forgive you.

Pass or Shoot

Forgiving others is a choice. It is really neat how forgiveness works. Although hard to explain, when you forgive someone you are actually setting yourself free from the control of the thing they did wrong. You no longer carry the hurt around inside you, so this helps you to feel a lot better. People will not always apologize or feel sorry for hurting you, but that should not keep you from forgiving them. Everyone deserves to be forgiven. Choose to forgive every wrong someone does to you.

Substitution

"He has taken our sins away from us as far as the east is from the west." (Psalm 103:12)

The Final Whistle

Ask for any prayer needs and during prayer ask the Lord to help your players forgive anyone who has hurt them. Ask your players to think of someone who may have done something wrong to them and tell them to ask God to help them to forgive them and to not remember the hurt any more.