



CENTRAL SPORTS

Basketball

*Central Sports exists to promote the
discovery of Jesus through sports.*

Team Name: _____

Practice Day/Time: _____

Table of Contents

Central Sports	2
Sports Offered	2
Practice/Game Day Cancellation Policy.....	2
Important Dates Table	2
Coaches: Requirements	3
Application & Background Check	3
Ministry Safe	3
Coaches: Expectations	3
Keys to Coaching	3
Central Sports Coaches’ Dress Code.....	4
Coaches: Responsibilities	4
Attend Coaches’ Training	4
Contact Your Team	4
Attend ‘Meet the Team’	4
Conduct Practices.....	5
Coach Games.....	5
Award End-of-Year Awards	5
Basketball at Central	6
Practice.....	9
Practice Breakdown.....	9
Skills to Teach/Links to Drills	9
Examples	15
Weekly Devotions	17

CENTRAL SPORTS

Central Sports focuses on these three things: fun, growth, and respect.

- **Fun**- We want the kids, parents and you, the coach, to have fun. We want learning about Jesus to be fun. He is the creator of fun, so why wouldn't we have fun learning about Him?
- **Growth** - We want kids to be better players at the end of the season than they were at the beginning of the year. We want the players', coaches' and parents' relationship with Jesus to be deeper that it was when the season started. If they don't know Jesus, we want them to get to know Him.
- **Respect**- We want players and coaches to play to win, but at the same time not win at all costs. We want players and coaches to respect the opponent. We want you to have the same reaction in winning and in losing. Jesus taught us to love others, so we need to love the other team.

Sports Offered

January-February : Basketball, Cheerleading

March-May : Soccer

August- November : Flag Football, Volleyball

Practice/Game Cancellation Policy

Basketball does not normally have weather related cancellations. However, if for some reason a cancellation does occur, emails will be sent out to the league and cancellation notices will be posted to the Central Basketball Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/140225189330223/>

IMPORTANT DATES

Meet the Team: _____

First Week of practice: _____

First Game: _____

Last Game: _____

Deadline to request award medals: _____

COACHES: REQUIREMENTS

Application & Background Check

All coaches must complete an application and background check. This includes assistant coaches and fill-in coaches. If you know you will miss a game and need a fill-in coach for a game, please make sure they have completed and turned in the appropriate paperwork.

Ministry Safe

As a coach, you MUST complete the Ministry Safe Sexual Assault Awareness Training. This is to protect the players, you as the coach, and Central Sports. There are videos and a test at the conclusion of the training. The entire training should take no longer than 45 minutes. This training certification lasts 3 years. If you have taken the Ministry Safe Training at another church, please send your certification to familyactivities@centralbcs.org. If your training expires during the middle of the season, you will be asked to complete a new training prior to the start of the season. We thank you for taking every step possible to protect the kids that we love.

COACHES: EXPECTATIONS

We want you to grow in the knowledge, skills and passion for stewarding players to Christ through the sport of basketball. When you coach, we want you to instill character in the players. This only comes from a relationship with Jesus and a constant renewing of your mind with the things of Him. (Rom. 12:2)

Coaching can have more purpose than teaching players how to serve or pass. As a coach, you can teach your players about the truths of God: that He loves us and wants to know us, along with the sport. We want to come alongside and equip you to share Jesus with your players.

As a coach, we want you to be a positive role model – encourage and respect your players and the game by communicating clearly and consistently, listening to your players, and knowing the sport.

Keys to Coaching

- Teach the game through drills – The ability to execute proper drills enhances skill level and improves athletic foundations. Your practices should utilize drills that enhance skill development.
- Teach the rules of the sport – For the players to grow in the sport, they must understand and apply the rules of the game. Take time to explain rules and why they are important.
- Instill sportsmanship with a competitive spirit – In sports, winning and losing are part of the game, just as it is for life. Knowing how to handle both in a positive way builds character in young athletes. Teach your players to play hard and play to win, but also teach them to put others before themselves with a positive attitude and sportsmanship.
- Communicate effectively – In order to teach the rules, explain drills, and teach sportsmanship, you have to be an effective communicator. Likewise, good communication and organization are crucial in keeping parents informed throughout the season. This includes keeping them up to date on practice and game times and having a plan in place each and every practice.

Central Sports Coaches' Dress Code

- Central Sports Coach shirt or sleeved t-shirt
 - NO tank tops, muscle shirts, crop tops or spaghetti straps
- Athletic or walking shorts
 - NO yoga pants, compression pants, compression shorts, leggings, jeggings, etc., unless covered by shorts.
- Tennis/athletic shoes
 - Come dressed for practice the way you want the kids dressed for practice; set the standard and example.

COACHES: RESPONSIBILITIES

Attend Coaches' Training

- Attend training
- Pick-up shirt, roster, and handbook

Contact Your Team

- Introduce yourself (and your assistant coaches if applicable)
- Inform parents of:
 - Team name & age division (for the parents with multiple children playing)
 - Practice nights (day of week, time)
 - Meet the Team details
 - First Practice date
 - First Game date
 - Dress code for practice & games
 - Practice atmosphere
 - Game day atmosphere

We encourage you to request a confirmation so you know your parents receive the information.

Attend 'Meet the Team'

Location: Family Life Center Gym (FLC Gym)

Cheerleaders – 6:00 pm

1-2nd grade Basketball – 6:00 pm

3-4th grade Basketball – 6:30 pm

5-6th grade Basketball – 7:00 pm

- Introduce yourself
- Tell them when the first practice is (day of week, time)
- Tell them where the first practice is
- Tell them what to bring to practice; learning attitude, water bottle
- Ask for a team parent to handle snack sign-up (if wanted/needed)
- Ask for help coaching if wanted/needed (must fill out paperwork/Ministry Safe training)
- Let them know when/if you will be out
- Hand out team rosters

IF YOU AND YOUR ASSISTANT COACH WILL NOT BE AT 'MEET THE TEAM', PLEASE LET YOUR TEAM KNOW THAT THEY DON'T NEED TO ATTEND. PLEASE LET US KNOW AS WELL!

Conduct Practices

- Be prepared for your practices! Conduct drills that teach skills.
- Be prepared for devotions! The players will get out of it what you put into it.
- Use positive reinforcement only; no punishment! Please no burpees, push-ups, etc.

Coach Games

- Be involved! Engage with players from the bench.
- Be an encourager! Always have uplifting words for your players. Praise them in the post-game locker room.
- **Do not argue with the refs/scorekeepers. Remember that they are volunteers! Please set a good example for your players.**

Award End-of-Year Medals

End-of-the-Year Medals are given after the last game of the season. This highlights your player's strength; it is not a "most improved, MVP, or best player" award. Multiple players can receive the same award. You will email Central Sports with a list of the awards you need. There are 10 award categories:

- Offense, Defense, Passing, Shooting, Hustle, Sportsmanship, Leadership, Character, Effort, Encourager

You will receive a reminder from Central Sports to provide your medal count & categories.

Please be aware: if you miss the deadline, your team will receive blank medals.

BASKETBALL AT CENTRAL

RULES FOR CENTRAL SPORTS BASKETBALL

- Before each game a devotional and prayer will be led over the sound system. Teams and coaches are expected to be at their benches during this time.
- The visiting team will begin the game with the ball.
- During each segment the clock runs continuously stopping only at the end of each segment for predetermined substitutions; this time should not be treated as a timeout.
- At the start of each 6-minute period, coaches will line players up from best to worst on the court, starting with the best player closest to the table. This allows coaches to line up and match substitutions based on height and ability without wasting valuable game time.
- At the end of each segment, the team that receives the ball next is based upon the direction of the possession arrow. This avoids stalling by the offensive team at the end of a segment.
- Teams switch goals at halftime.
- Any games ending in a tie should remain a tie. There is no overtime period.
- No league standings are maintained

1-2nd Grade Defense Rules

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed. In most cases, players are guarding the opponent that closely matches ability and height, creating a more competitive system for all on the court
- Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they're guarding.
- Isolation plays will not be allowed because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
- Double teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
 - **Offensive Picks and Screens** – Defensive switching is not allowed on offensive picks and screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend his or her offensive player. This is commonly referred to as "help and recover".

Defense Rules (cont'd)

- **Fast Breaks** – During any fast break (when the team that gains possession pushes quickly into the opponent's end of the court), another defensive player not assigned to the ball handler may help in order to slow or stop the fast break. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders should return to guarding their assigned players.
 - **Help Defense** – If a defender is guarding their player, and the player he or she is guarding is within arm's reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense.
- At the beginning of each segment, both coaches should line up the players at mid-court in the order the table tells you to. This act is performed to promote equal player matchups.
 - 1-2 grade – each player will wear a colored wristband (red, white, blue black, green). Players guard the corresponding color. (If both coaches agree to a match-up problem the may switch wristbands).
- Full-court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This creates an equal opportunity for each athlete to participate both on offense and defense
- Due to the shortness of the court in cross court play, backcourt violation will not be called.
- Steals:
 - In 1-2 grade a defender may only steal the ball from the player they are guarding.
- A player committing two fouls in one six-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation closest in ability comes in as the substitute. This does not change the normal rotation, because the fouled-out player does not come back into the game until scheduled to do so. The player who comes in as a substitute gains extra playing time. This extra time does not affect the predetermined substitution system.

Note: In a second foul situation, when a team only has five players at a game, replace the substitution rule with a two-point penalty by awarding the fouled team two additional points. The opposing team then takes possession.

3-4th Grade Defense Rules

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times. Zone defenses are not allowed. In most cases, players are guarding the opponent that closely matches ability and height, creating a more competitive system for all on the court
- Defensive players must stay within arm's reach of the player they're guarding.
- Isolation plays will not be allowed because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.

Defense Rules (cont'd)

- Double teaming is not allowed. However, help defense is strongly encouraged in the following instances:
 - **Offensive Picks and Screens** – Defensive switching is allowed on offensive picks and screens. The non-screened defender can help his or her teammate by temporarily switching until the teammate recovers to defend his or her offensive player. This is commonly referred to as “help and recover”.
 - **Fast Breaks** – During any fast break (when the team that gains possession pushes quickly into the opponent’s end of the court), another defensive player not assigned to the ball handler may help in order to slow or stop the fast break. Upon stopping the fast break, defenders may return to their originally assigned player, or they may stay with the player that they are currently guarding.
 - **Help Defense** – If a defender is guarding their player, and the player he or she is guarding is within arm’s reach, the defender is allowed to provide help defense.
- At the beginning of each segment, both coaches should line up the players at mid-court in the order the table tells you to. This act is performed to promote equal player matchups.
 - This is not their ASSIGNED person. They do not HAVE to guard this person, but this is to show the most likely matchups based off of skill.
- Full-court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This creates an equal opportunity for each athlete to participate both on offense and defense
- Due to the shortness of the court in cross court play, backcourt violation will not be called.
- Steals:
 - In 3-6 grades if a defender remains within arm’s length of the player they are guarding they may steal the ball from another offensive player
- A player committing two fouls in one six-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation closest in ability comes in as the substitute. This does not change the normal rotation, because the fouled-out player does not come back into the game until scheduled to do so. The player who comes in as a substitute gains extra playing time. This extra time does not affect the predetermined substitution system.

Note: In a second foul situation, when a team only has five players at a game, replace the substitution rule with a two-point penalty by awarding the fouled team two additional points. The opposing team then takes possession.

5-6th Grade Defense Rules

- Man-to-man defense will be played at all times outside the 3-point line. Zone defenses are allowed inside of the 3-point line. In most cases, players are guarding the opponent that closely matches ability and height, creating a more competitive system for all on the court.

Defense Rules (cont'd)

- Isolation plays will not be allowed because they take away the opportunity for improvement for all players and contradict the spirit of the rules. This prevents defenders from sagging or crowding an area of the court to gain a defensive advantage.
- At the beginning of each segment, both coaches should line up the players at mid-court in the order the table tells you to. This act is performed to promote equal player matchups.
 - This is not their ASSIGNED person. They do not HAVE to guard this person, but this is to show the most likely matchups based off of skill.
- Full-court presses are not allowed. Defensive players may not guard their opponents in the backcourt. This creates an equal opportunity for each athlete to participate both on offense and defense
- Backcourt violation will be called when playing 5th – 6th grade.
- Steals:
 - Inside the 3-point line, a defender may steal the ball from an offensive player at any point.
 - Outside the 3-point line, if a double team results in a steal, the official will call for a violation and the offense will retain possession.
- A player committing two fouls in one six-minute segment must sit out the remainder of that segment. The next player in the rotation closest in ability comes in as the substitute. This does not change the normal rotation, because the fouled-out player does not come back into the game until scheduled to do so. The player who comes in as a substitute gains extra playing time. This extra time does not affect the predetermined substitution system.

Note: In a second foul situation, when a team only has five players at a game, replace the substitution rule with a two-point penalty by awarding the fouled team two additional points. The opposing team then takes possession.

1-2nd Grade Offense Rules

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
- Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team (no bonus rule). All shooting fouls result in 2 points. And the defense gaining possession.
- No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.
- Last 2 minutes of the game:
 - Any non-shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 1 point for the offense and will retain possession of ball.
 - Any shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 2 points for the offense and the defense will take possession of the ball.
 - This will not waste precious game time and will prevent intentional fouling at the end of the game.

3-4th Grade Offense Rules

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
- Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team (no bonus rule). All shooting fouls result in 2 points and the defense gains possession. If the shooter makes the basket it will be counted as 3 points.
- No score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal. It will be treated as a turnover. This will prevent further embarrassing a player for making this mistake.
- Last 2 minutes of the game:
 - Any non-shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 1 point for the offense and will retain possession of ball.
 - Any shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 2 points for the offense and the defense will take possession of the ball. If the shooter makes the basket it will be counted as 3 points.
 - This will not waste precious game time and will prevent intentional fouling at the end of the game.

5-6th Grade Offense Rules

- The offense must purposefully attack the defense in every situation – no stalling. After a warning from the referee, a violation will be called resulting in a turnover. This will prevent a team with the lead from running the clock out by staying in the backcourt.
- Non-shooting fouls result in the ball being taken out on the side by the offended team (no bonus rule). All shooting fouls result in free throws except for in the last 2 minutes of the game.
(5-6 grade – if a foul occurs on a made basket, the player will shoot one free throw.)
(All free-throws is 5-6 grade will be one shot for corresponding 1,2,3 points).

5-6th Offense Rules (cont'd)

- Score will be given for a basket in the wrong goal, and it will be treated as a turnover.
- Last 2 minutes of the game:
 - Any non-shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 1 point for the offense and will retain possession of ball.
 - Any shooting foul in the last 2 minutes of the game will result in 2 points for the offense and the defense will take possession of the ball. If the foul is on a 3-point shot, it will result in 3 points.
 - This will not waste precious game time and will prevent intentional fouling at the end of the game.

SUBSTITUTIONS

- This substitution system is designed to provide every player an equal opportunity for improvement. The substitution system ensures that:
 - The starting lineup shifts down one player every game, allowing every child the opportunity to be in the starting lineup
 - No child will sit out back-to-back six minute segments
 - Every child will play at least half of the game
 - In most cases, each child will play against someone of similar ability
 - Playing time for all players is virtually even over the course of the season
 - The starting five will change by one player each week
 - The best players on your team will always be playing with teammates who are not as good as them
 - The weaker players will be given the opportunity to play with a teammate who can make them better
 - We will need your player ranking order by **December 16th**.

Practice

- Practice nights: Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday
- Practice times: 5:30-6:30 pm, 6:30-7:30 pm or 7:30-8:30 pm.
- Basketball courts are shared for practices.
- Please wait outside the gym until your practice time begins.
- Devotions are at the midway point of your practice. An intern will announce balls down.
- Positive reinforcement only; no punishments such as burpees, push-ups, etc.

PRACTICE BREAKDOWN

- *Pre-Practice Huddle (3-5 minutes)* – Cover specific rules and the basics of the game. Teach and review proper techniques for each skill needed for practice drills.
- *Warm-up Activity (3-5 minutes)* – Provide players the opportunity to practice individually and slowly warm up their muscles.
- *Practice skills through drills (20 minutes)* – Use drills that reinforce skill development. Focus on only one to two skills per practice.
- *Mid-practice huddle (5-7 minutes)* – Share the practice-specific devotion for each week. An intern will come in and announce devotion time at the mid-point of practice.
- *Scrimmage or games that teach (20 minutes)* – Guide players in using the skills they are learning through scrimmaging.
- *Post-practice huddle (5 minutes)* – Communicate game times, picture times, etc. After practice is a great time to engage in conversation with parents.

Game Day: 1st – 2nd Grade Division

Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
 - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals 'balls in'

During Game

- Six 6 minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
 - Do not leave the court.
- Teams will switch sides at half time

After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
 - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

Game Day: 3rd – 4th Grade Division

Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
 - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals 'balls in'

During Game

- Six 6 minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
 - Do not leave the court.
- Teams will switch sides at half time

After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
 - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

Game Day: 5th – 6th Grade Division

Prior to Game

- Set your lineup (The scoretable will also have this if you forget)
 - Equal start time/play time for every player
- Find out which bench is yours (scoretable will know)
- Warm-up until ref signals 'balls in'

During Game

- Six 6 minute quarters (no clock stoppages) with a break for substitutions
 - Do not leave the court.
- Teams will switch sides at half time

After the Game

- Line up and shake hands (high-fives)
- Dismiss to the locker room (classroom) on your side of the gym
 - Classrooms will have signs on them for your designated locker room
- Pass out team snack
- Positively congratulation/critique your team

EXAMPLES

Example Intro/Meet the Team Email:

Howdy parents!

We are so excited to have your child on the {TEAM NAME} basketball team at Central Sports! Our heart is to teach these kids fundamental basketball skills, guide them in practicing good sportsmanship, and deepen their understanding of God's perfect love for them. We are joyfully praying over your children and this season together!

***Meet the team is {DAY OF WEEK} from {TIME} at the Central Church Family Life Center.** This is a come-and-go event. We look forward to meeting you and your precious kids that night!

***Our practice time will be on {DAY OF WEEK} from {TIME} on {Court} at the Central Church Family Life Center. Our first practice is on {DAY OF WEEK}, {DATE}.**

***It is IMPERATIVE that your kids be ON TIME to all practices and games. We only have 1 hour a week to practice so every minute counts!**

***Your children will need a good pair of athletic shoes for the season. Athletic shorts must be worn over any tights/legging. Shirts should cover the midriff.**

***Games will begin Saturday, {Date}. We will send you the game schedule as soon as it released.**

{Indicate how you will communicate throughout the season, whether that is groupme, group texts, emails, etc.

***Please let us know if you have any questions. Go {Team Name}!**

Example Weekly Team Email:

Central Sports Basketball – Rockets, Week of 12/1

PRACTICE

Thursday, January 9, 5:30 pm

Please have players ready to go at 5:30 pm.

Make sure they have a water bottle, have used the restroom, and are wearing tennis shoes.

GAME

Saturday January 11, 9:00 am

Arrive by 8:45 – **If you will not make the game please let me know ASAP**

Visit the restroom prior to the game. Bring a water bottle!

****SNACKS** - (Parent Name)**

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

*****UPCOMING*****

PRACTICE

Thursday, January 16, 5:30 pm

PICTURES

Saturday, January 18, 12:40 pm

This is an example of a weekly communication sent out on Sunday or Monday.

The UPCOMING events listed out the whole season (practice, games, pictures, snacks, etc).

These examples are provided to assist you with wording. You do not need to copy them word for word.

Make sure to adjust dates, time, and team names!

Make sure that you include the team name & age division in the Subject Line!

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

- Be prepared each week for devotional. Know the scripture; don't just read it off the paper. Bring your Bible.
- Make the devotional your own; personalize it. Talk about situations your players will understand. Relate it to the game, school, home life, etc.
- Ask for questions! If you don't know the answer, tell them you will get back to them with an answer and do it!
- Remember: YOU may be the only 'Jesus' they see!

Week 1: Getting to Know You

At the halftime of practice – play **The Name Game**:

- 1) Have each player give their name and tell you the animal they would most like to be and why.
- 2) You, the coach, now try to go around and name each of the players and the animal they want to be like – this may be challenging.
- 3) Have each player go around and try to name all the players with the animal.

During a water break, find out from your players:

- Where they go to school
- Whether they have brothers and sisters
- What they like to do in their free time

Tell them a snippet of your story – you will do more of this throughout the season. This would include:

- Where you grew up
- Where you went to school
- Whether you have brothers and sisters
- What you liked to do in your free time when you were their age

Try to memorize the verse by the end of the season:

Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Week 2 – Gospel
Genesis 3
John 3:16
1 Corinthians 15: 55-57
John 11: 25-26

How many of you have never ever messed up in your life? You've gotten a 100 on every test/homework, you always clean your room right when your parents ask you too, you've never lied about anything? Yeah, we've all messed up at some point or another.

Today we are going to talk about the first people to EVER mess up, Adam and Eve. Their story can be found in Genesis 3. Does anyone know anything about Adam and Eve? (Wait for responses). They were created by God and put in the garden of Eden and got to walk and talk with God on a regular basis. Everything was perfect for them, all they had to do was not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That was it. They could eat from any other tree/bush in the garden, but one day the devil spoke to Eve and told her that she would not surely die if she ate from the tree. He told her that she would be like God and convinced her to eat the fruit. So, Eve ate it and then gave some to Adam to eat and they disobeyed God. This was when sin entered the world. Sin is anything that we do that disobeys God and because of sin, God had to cast Adam and Eve out of the garden because he could not be with them anymore. God cannot be in the presence of sin.

Many years went by, and God still looked after his people, but the world was evil because of sin. However, at just the right time, God sent His Son, Jesus, to come and live a perfect life that we never could, die on a cross, and rise 3 days later. Does anyone know the verse John 3:16? (Wait for response; if no one knows it, please read it to them). When Jesus died and rose again, He took on all of the sins of every person in the world that had ever lived and will ever live. He took on each of our sin and buried it in the grave and then rose again to show that he had conquered our sin and to show that death had no hold on us anymore. Read 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

That's not the end of the story though. Jesus will come back and judge the world based on if we are followers of him or not. Those who are Christians will get to spend forever in Heaven with God. Those who are not will be eternally separated from God, and that is a tragic thing to happen. We want everyone to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior because Jesus wants what's best for you. Read John 11:25-26

If you have never asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life, I'd love to talk to you more about it, and if you have THAT IS AWESOME!

Let's pray.

Week 3 – “Unwholesome talk”

Ephesians 4:29

James 3:10

Who can tell me what we talked about last week? (Wait for answers, confirm if correct) We talked about how Jesus came and died for our sins so that we could have a relationship with God! This week, I want to introduce our memory verse for this season. Ephesians 4:29, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” We’re going to be breaking down this verse piece by piece as we go through the season.

The first thing I want to focus on are the words unwholesome talk. That word unwholesome is a big one and it be kind of confusing if you’re reading this. What all is considered unwholesome? The dictionary defines it as “Morally harmful”, or wrong. Our words have the ability to cause harm to others, and we have to be really careful about what we say.

James 3:10 talks about what our words can do. “Out of the same mouth come praising and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.” Sometimes it’s really hard to say something positive to others because you don’t want to, but we are to praise God continually and bless others rather than tear them down.

What are some things that we can say to one another on the court that might build one another up?

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 4 – “Do not let”

Ephesians 4:29

James 1:26; 3:5

Does anyone have our memory verse down? (Let one say it if they have it) Let’s say it together, Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Who can tell me what we talked about last time? I know it’s been a while, but I know y’all remember. (Wait for answers, confirm if correct) Right! We talked about unwholesome talk and about how it tears people down. Do we want to have unwholesome talk? No! We want to encourage others and bless them and praise God!

This week, we’re going to go backward in the verse and talk about the first few words that say, “Do not let.” This is a huge deal because it means that when we have unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, we’re LETTING it happen. Sometimes we react and we say things, and as an excuse, we’ll say, “well it just came out. I didn’t mean it!” Has anyone ever done that before? (Raise hands) Yeah. We’ve all done that at some point, but this verse is telling us that we have control over what we say. James 1:26 tells us, “Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.” Our tongues are really powerful things. James a little later in chapter 3 verse 5 compares the tongue to a small spark that sets a whole forest on fire. It might be a little part of your body, but it can do a lot of good in building someone up, or it can do a lot of bad in tearing someone down.

We want to make sure that we are building one another up by not letting those unwholesome words come out of your mouths.

How can we keep a tight rein on our tongues this week?

Asks for prayer requests

Pray

Week 5 – “Come out of your mouths”

Ephesians 4:29

Proverbs 18:21

What did we talk about last week? (Wait for answers, affirm correct answers) We talked about not letting ourselves say things we shouldn't. Does anyone want to say the memory verse? (Let one say it) Let's say it together one time too! Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Have you ever heard the phrase, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”? Is that one always true? Do we get hurt by words? (Have them shake head yes or no) I know I've been hurt by words, and I've hurt people with my words before. This week we're talking about what “comes out of your mouths.”

Proverbs 18:21 tells us, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” We can use our words to tell people about us, help people, ask questions, play games, laugh, express enjoyment, praise God, all a whole bunch of other things. But we could also use our words for mean things. We get the choice to either bring life with our mouths or death. Which would you want to hear? (Wait for response) I want to hear nice, life-giving words said to me.

Words can be powerful, so think about what you say this week.

Asks for prayer requests

Pray

Week 6 – “But only what is helpful”

Ephesians 4:29

Proverbs 12:18

What part of the verse did we cover last week? (Wait for responses) We talked about what comes out of our mouths! Did anyone have a chance to share nice words with someone this week? (Let them share and affirm) Who knows our memory verse? (Let one say it). Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Have you ever had a time where you were sad, and someone said something that made you happy and changed your whole mood? (Wait for response and share an experience of your own). Words can have such a good effect on us.

Today we’re talking about the part of the verse that says, “but only what is helpful.” Just like some of you shared how words can make you feel better, we’re called to only use our words to help people! It’s like how Proverbs 12:18 tells us, “There is one whose rash words are like sword thrust, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” Meaning we can hurt with our words or heal. I bet we’ve all been hurt by words, but we’ve also said we’ve been helped by words! What are some ways we can use our words to help others or heal them this week? (Wait for answers and affirm correct ones)

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 7– Ephesians 4:29 “For building others up”

Ephesians 4:29

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Job 2

Who can say the memory verse? (Let one try) Let’s all say it as a team, Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Who can tell us what we talked about last week? (Wait for answers, affirm if correct) We talked about speaking words that are helpful! This week we’re going to talk about the next part of our memory verse, “for building others up.”

All of us have had times in our lives when we felt knocked down. Maybe you didn't win a game at recess, disobeyed your parents, or things didn't go your way. Then we can feel disappointed or like we disappointed someone else. However, this is exactly why Paul tells the Ephesians to build one another up with their words.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 tells us that “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone and has not another to lift him up!” We are to build one another up and be there to help one another up if we do fall. None of us can do life by ourselves, and sometimes just letting people know that you’re there is enough to help. When Job was really struggling, some of his friends came and sat with him for 7 whole days without saying a word to comfort him!

We need to look for ways to build one another up when we fall. If we mess up during practice or during a game, we have to look for ways to pick each other back up! Let’s all try to find ways to encourage the people around us this week!

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 8 – Ephesians 4:29 “According to their needs”

Ephesians 4:29

Job 2:13

Who wants to say the memory verse this week? (Let one say) Let’s say it together this time, Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Who can tell me what we talked about last week? (Wait for answers, confirm if correct) Right! We talked about building others up because we all fall down sometimes!

This week we’re continuing in our memory verse that talks about “according to their needs.” We not only want to build others up, but we want to do it according to what they need. Sometimes we think we know exactly what someone else needs to hear, but that’s just what we would want. We talked a little about it last week, but let’s look at Job 2:13. Job has already lost all of his property, his children, and he has gross boils all over his body. He’s miserable, and 3 of his friends come over to try and comfort him. I’m sure that all of them had words that they thought would be helpful, but what Job needed was for them to just be with them. Job 2:13 tells us that “And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was great.”

Sometimes we don’t know what to say to people when they’re struggling, and that’s okay. What are some things that you guys can think of to say to people when they’re sad? (Affirm correct answers) What cheers you up when you’re sad? (Affirm correct answers) Let’s try to find ways to build people up according to what they need this week.

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 9 – Ephesians 4:29 “That it may benefit those who listen”

Ephesians 4:29

Philippians 2:3-4

What did we learn last week? (Wait for responses and affirm correct answers). Right, we learned about building people up according to their needs! Did anyone find ways to do that this past week? (Wait for responses)

Who wants to say our memory verse? (Let one share) Let’s say it all together! Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

This week we’re talking about the part of the verse that says, “that it may benefit those who listen.” Benefitting is something that helps someone. So, this means when we use our words to build someone up, we do it to help them.

In fact, Philippians 2:3-4 tells us, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” Maybe you feel tempted to compliment someone, so they’ll give you a compliment or tell someone a secret, so they tell you one too. But we’re told that we shouldn’t do it like that! We aren’t using our words and building others up because we might get something out of it; we build others up to value them better than ourselves.

As you go through this week, think about how you can value others with your words and not look to get anything out of it.

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 10 – Ephesians 4:29

Luke 6:43-45

Psalm 51:10

What did we talk about last week? (Wait for responses and affirm correct ones) We covered how we can value others and benefit them.

Who wants to say our memory verse? (Let one say it) Ephesians 4:29 “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

We’ve been talking all season about this verse and breaking it down but what does it all mean? (Wait for answers, affirm correct ones) We’ve covered the importance of our words and the impact they can have on someone. Why do we care about our words? It’s a reflection of what’s inside of us.

Luke 6:43-45 says, “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” What comes out of us reflects what’s in our hearts. If Jesus is in our hearts and the Savior of our lives changes us from the inside out.

If you struggle with that, Psalm 51:10 says we can ask God to “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

Think about the words coming out of you this week and what they reflect in your heart.

Ask for prayer requests

Pray

Week 11: The Gospel

Key Verses:

John 3:16

John 16:33

Romans 5:8

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Ephesians 2:8

I want you to think all the way back to the first week of basketball. Some of you had never played, and some had played. Now think about how much you have learned about basketball and how much better you have gotten at playing (Make sure to point out an accomplishment of one of your struggling players). Even with all the practice, do you think there will ever be a time that you will become a PERFECT basketball player? Do you ever think there will come a time when you don't mess up in a game or practice EVER? No. Probably not.

This is how the Christian life works too. When you first become a Christian, you're not suddenly able to quote the entire Bible with no problem. You have to make an effort to memorize scripture, read your Bible, and pray. And even after you have been a Christian for a while, you are still going to mess up and sin. But the coolest thing about that is, just like we've been talking about all season long, God is still with us even in those times. Being a Christian is not something that is easy. Jesus even told us, "In this life, you will have trouble." (John 16:33)

The good news is that for those who have become a Christian, Jesus died on the cross for EVERYTHING we have done wrong. That means that everything we have done wrong, and everything we will do wrong in our lives. He paid for it all with his blood and then raised to life three days later, conquering sin and death's power over us. Romans 5:8 tells us, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." For those who have never made the decision to ask Jesus to be the Lord of your life, that means that Christ died for you too! He loves each and every one of us that much! And He is right there, waiting for you to turn to Him whenever you are ready.

Read Romans 3:23, 6:23, and Ephesians 2:8. All you have to do is admit that you have sinned against God and that there is nothing you can do to fix this on your own, believe that Jesus is God's son and that He came to die on a cross and rise three days later to conquer everyone's sin and death, and then was raised three days later, and finally we must confess that we are followers of Jesus and tell others about Him and what He has done in our life! If any of you have never asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life, please come talk to me and I'd love to talk more about it with you. If you have, THAT'S AWESOME! Continue to tell your friends about what Jesus has done.

Let's pray.