



# CHARACTER COACH INITIATIVE

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## Volunteer Packet

FELLOWSHIP OF  
CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

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**GREAT LAKES REGION**  
Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia



**VISION**

**MISSION**

**VALUES**

**STRATEGY**

**METHODS**

**VISION**

To see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

**MISSION**

To lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.

**VALUES**

Our relationships will demonstrate steadfast commitment to Jesus Christ and His Word through Integrity, Serving, Teamwork and Excellence.

**INTEGRITY** • We will demonstrate Christ-like wholeness, privately and publicly. (Proverbs 11:3)

**SERVING** • We will model Jesus' example of serving. (John 13:1-17)

**TEAMWORK** • We will express our unity in Christ in all our relationships. (Philippians 2:1-4)

**EXCELLENCE** • We will honor and glorify God in all we do. (Colossians 3:23-24)

**STRATEGY**

**To and Through the Coach**

We pursue our vision and mission through the **strategy of to and through the coach**. We seek ministry first to coaches hearts, marriages and families. Then, when ready, we minister through coaches to their fellow coaches, teams and athlete leaders.

Billy Graham said, "A coach will impact more people in one year than the average person will in an entire lifetime." With the influence of a coach, FCA recognizes the most strategic way to reach more athletes is to first reach the coach.

**METHODS**

As FCA matures, we seek to make disciples through our methods of engaging, equipping and empowering coaches and athletes to know and grow in Christ and lead others to do the same.



• **ENGAGE** • (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

We engage relationally by connecting with individuals and through events in many different environments by building genuine trust, sharing our lives and sharing the gospel. We strive to connect with coaches and athletes where they are on their spiritual journey.

• **EQUIP** • (Ephesians 4:12)

After cultivating relationships and once coaches and athletes come to faith in Christ, we want to equip them with Christ-centered training, events, resources and on-going support in what it means to be a follower of Christ, growing in God's Word and applying it to life.

• **EMPOWER** • (2 Timothy 2:2)

Once equipped, we empower faithful leaders who desire to use their time, talents and treasures to help other coaches and athletes experience the gospel, grow in their faith and share Him with others. We desire to develop disciples who make disciples, assisting them so that they can in turn engage, equip and empower others to know and grow in Christ and lead others to do the same.



# INTRODUCTION TO FCA

## History:

More than 65 years ago, God put a vision into the heart of Don McClanen. As a young athlete and coach, he wondered why professional athletes endorsed products like shaving cream and cigarettes but not a Christian lifestyle. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes was berthed in 1954, founded on McClanen's vision to bring glory to Jesus Christ. The first FCA Camp launched at Estes Park, Colorado in 1956 with 256 athletes and coaches attending. The first campus ministry began in 1966 with the formation of FCA Huddles.



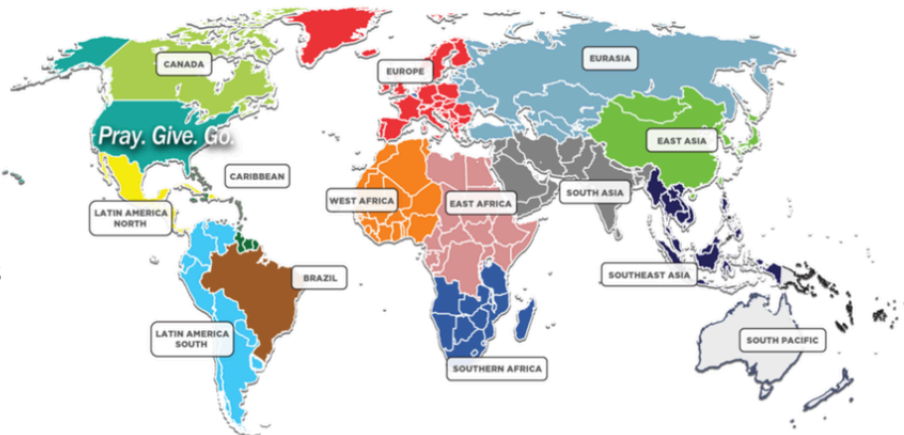
**Left:** A picture from Estes Park, Colorado at the first FCA Camp in 1956. FCA now hosts camps in 92 countries across the world.

## Today:

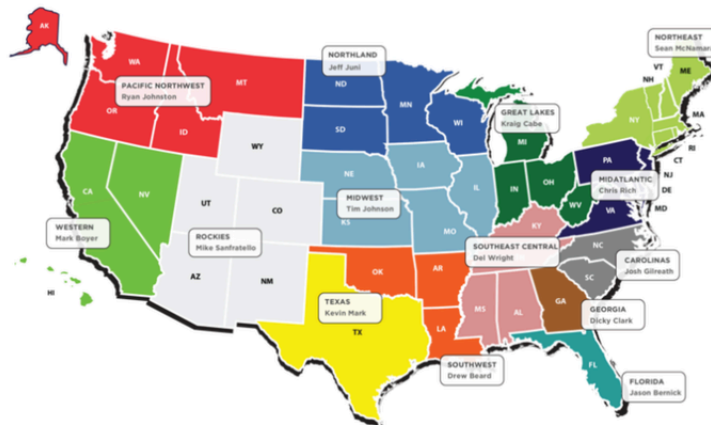
Since 1954, FCA has challenged coaches and athletes at every level to use the powerful platform of sport to reach every coach and athlete with the transforming power of Jesus Christ. FCA serves local communities in nearly 100 countries, seeking to Engage, Equip, and Empower coaches and athletes to make disciples who make disciples.

From the beginning, FCA has been committed to relationships, transformation, and multiplication. This approach shares the Gospel to millions of coaches and athletes through programs, such as Conferences, Camps, Huddles, and many more. By God's grace, this resulted in hundreds of thousands of decisions to follow Christ. FCA has been relentlessly pursuing the Great Commission for nearly seven decades.

## 14 International Field Ministry Regions



## 14 U.S. Field Ministry Regions





# CHARACTER COACH INITIATIVE

## What is a Character Coach?

A Character Coach is a volunteer that Engages, Equips, and Empowers coaches and athletes in spiritual growth through character development. Specifically, Character Coaches:

- Are an extension of the FCA ministry
- Can be an FCA volunteer or FCA staff member
- Can serve any athletic team on campus
- Work in conjunction with the coach to schedule regular times to provide character development discussion and can also provide a team devotional and/or Bible study that has voluntary player attendance
- Can also provide a team devotional and/or Bible study that has voluntary player attendance

## Who can serve as a Character Coach?

A wide variety of people can serve as a Character Coach. You don't need to be a sports ministry professional to faithfully serve and to significantly impact the lives of coaches and athletes. Among those who could serve include:

- Parents of players in youth sports
- Former high school, college, and professional athletes
- Business / community leaders with interest in ministry through sports
- Athletic trainers or other support personnel with sports teams
- Pastors or other ministry professionals

## Why Character Coaches?

We expect a game plan for coaching the X's and O's of our sport. What isn't always clear is how to coach character. Over time, we have seen an ever-growing gap develop between coaching the fundamental aspects of a specific sport and the development of quality character. Character Coaches exist to fill this crucial gap in developing the complete athlete.

CHARACTER COACH	CHAPLAIN
Values Based	Faith-Based
The goal is to teach character/leadership qualities	The goal is to provide spiritual guidance and direction
Coaches can make it mandatory	Coaches must make it optional
Model + inform	Model + inform + convert

## What is the Character Coach Initiative?

The Character Coach Initiative is an FCA program intentionally designed to serve more coaches and athletes in a sport-specific team setting. As we pursue our mission of leading **every** coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church, we firmly believe that an army of volunteers is needed to increase local relational capacity. By being present and building relationships with coaches and athletes, we believe this enables opportunities to Engage, Equip, and Empower these individuals with the Gospel. This Initiative is a concentrated effort of mobilizing volunteers for maximum impact!



# BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

Character Coaching is best described by two simple expressions. It is to be the presence of Jesus Christ in the sporting world by **extravagantly loving** and **selflessly serving**

## God's Invitation to the Sporting World:

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

## God's Commandment to the Character Coach:

Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

Mark 12:29-31

## God's Mission for the Character Coach:

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

## God's Example of **Extravagantly Loving** — Jesus Christ:

"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."

John 15:13

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

John 13:34-35

## God's Example of **Selflessly Serving** — Jesus Christ:

"After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them."

John 13:12-17



# GUIDELINES

## CharacterCoach Responsibilities

### Pre-Season

- Pray about this opportunity to serve
- Meet with local FCA staff
- Submit Ministry Leader Application (MLA)
- Complete online training
- Complete in-person training
- Meet with head coach and FCA staff for responsibility review
- Complete necessary volunteer protocol from the school district

### In-Season

- **Be Seen. Be Known. Be Heard.**  
Visit your team's practice a minimum of one time per week, for a minimum of 30 minutes at a time  
Attend a minimum of 50% of your team's games
- Host a pre-game meeting for your team each week (pending head coach approval)
- At least one (1) face-to-face contact per week with the coaching staff
- At least one (1) face-to-face individual contact per month with the head coach
- Recruit and develop a group of people to serve as prayer warriors for your team
- Bi-weekly/monthly conference call with FCA staff and other Character Coaches.

## Training Overview

### Online

- Approximately 2.5 hours
- Completed at \_\_\_\_\_
- Training Components
  - 1. Discipleship
  - 2. Be Seen. Be Known. Be Heard.

### In-Person

- Approximately 2 hours
- Led by FCA staff
- Training components
  - 1. Best practices
  - 2. Commissioning

## Ongoing Support from FCA Staff

- FCA staff attends initial meeting with head coach and Character Coach to review expectations and answer any questions
- Bi-weekly/monthly conference calls to provide on-going training and collaboration amongst Character Coaches
- Personal check-in from staff once per month
- Private website updated with videos, resources, best practices, etc.
- Character Coach celebration event held twice per year (winter/ summer)



# BE SEEN. BE KNOWN. BE HEARD.

## BE SEEN

**Principle:** Establishing a consistent presence with the coaches and athletes sets the tone for all future ministry opportunities. Once you've established your identity through presence, you can have influence with them without even being there.

**Key Point:** Consistent presence demonstrates commitment

**Emphasis:**

- 1. Personal Availability
- 2. Privileged Access
- 3. Painful Opportunity

## BE KNOWN

**Principle:** The foundation of all ministry is relationships. The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) is a call for us to love God and love our neighbors. Rather than seeing coaches or athletes as resources or as a constituency, see them as people whom the Lord has given you to love, to nurture, and to develop.

**Key Point:** Focus your ministry on coaches and athletes.

**Emphasis:**

- 1. Pursue
- 2. Respond
- 3. Be available
- 4. Learn their names
- 5. Ask good questions and understand culture
- 6. Meet the families of coaches and athletes
- 7. Develop a resource network for coaches, athletes, and their families

## BE HEARD

**Principle:** Giving a weekly devotion is not being the Character Coach; that's being a guest speaker. Being a Character Coach is a process; not an event. Take a long-term approach to sharing your faith by looking for ways to serve. Being involved with the team and developing relationships with players and coaches is being the Character Coach. You earn the right to be heard by meeting needs.

**Key Point:** Share clear and relevant messages whenever you're allowed to share.

**Emphasis:**

- 1. Be brief
- 2. Be personal
- 3. Be motivational
- 4. Be simple



# BEST PRACTICES

## KEY QUALITIES

**Humility** — Consider others as more important yourself as you selflessly serve the needs of coaches and athletes.

**Loyalty** — If you will be loyal to the coaches and athletes on their worst days, you'll have their hearts on their best days.

**Encouragement** — Everyone needs encouragement! Look for opportunities to speak life into the coaches and athletes you serve through words of affirmation as you observe attitudes of integrity, teamwork, serving and excellence. Remember — what's rewarded is repeated!

**Focus** — The performance and attitudes of coaches and athletes is on public display. Both the good and the not so good. A Character Coach must look below the surface, past the visible, and seek the heart in order to coach the heart.

**Opportunity** — As a Character Coach, you have the opportunity for others to see your faith in action. We count it as a privilege to pray for, serve, challenge and love the coaches and athletes in your area.

## MINDSET

The Character Coach:

- Is not another “program”, but instead, takes things off the head coach’s plate by adding value to the team
- Helps develop program culture by teaching and modeling character values; everything taught aligns with the head coach’s vision
- Does not influence playing time and does not teach physical skills
- Cannot promise “full” confidence; required to report necessary issues
- Trained by FCA but serves the head coach and the team
- Must abide by the Equal Access Act when leading faith-based teaching

HELPFUL	HURTFUL
Being faithful in assigned tasks	Over-stepping boundaries
Watching practice from the sidelines	Walking onto the field/court without permission
Caring for others	Boasting publicly about your role with the team
Plowing through losing streaks	Riding the bandwagon during winning streaks
Hand out water at practice	Criticizing poor plan
Cleaning up	Second-guessing coaches
Ride the bus where assigned	Shunning people who make you feel uncomfortable