

16-Week Christian Character Guide

For 8U Basketball Coaches

Developing the player, the teammate, and the person while keeping Christ at the center.

OUR TEAM IDENTITY

We HUSTLE.

We LISTEN.

We ENCOURAGE.

We SERVE.

We RESPOND THE RIGHT WAY.

After every mistake: NEXT PLAY!

How to Use This Guide

Use one value each week. Keep the opening huddle to about three minutes, reinforce the value during drills, and revisit it at the end. Character does not earn God's love. It grows as a response to His love and the work He does in us.

Introduce: Name the value and ask what it means.

Teach: Share the Bible reference and Christian truth.

Connect: Relate it to basketball and everyday life.

Challenge: Tell players what you will watch for.

Recognize: Name the value when a player demonstrates it.

Close: Ask who demonstrated it, then pray together.

Season Overview

Week	Value	Bible Reference
1	Effort	Colossians 3:23
2	Listening	James 1:19
3	Teamwork	1 Corinthians 12:20-21
4	Respect	Philippians 2:3-4
5	Encouragement	1 Thessalonians 5:11
6	Responsibility	Luke 16:10
7	Courage	Joshua 1:9
8	Perseverance	James 1:2-4
9	Self-Control	Galatians 5:22-23
10	Unselfishness	Philippians 2:4-5
11	Honesty	Proverbs 12:22
12	Confidence	Philippians 4:13
13	Patience	Galatians 6:9
14	Leadership	Mark 10:43-45
15	Humility	Philippians 2:3
16	Gratitude	1 Thessalonians 5:18

EFFORT

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" - **Colossians 3:23**

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is effort. Our Bible reference is Colossians 3:23. Serve God wholeheartedly. In basketball, hustle, finish drills, and give your best even when tired. Away from basketball, give your best at school, chores, and other responsibilities. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "What does your best effort look like?" and "Who saw someone demonstrate effort today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference. Name a few examples you saw today.

Short Prayer

God, thank You for the ability to play and learn. Help us give our best effort, especially when something is difficult. May our work honor You. Amen.

LISTENING

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger - **James 1:19**

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is listening. Our Bible reference is James 1:19. God wants us to be quick to listen. In basketball, stop, look, and listen when coaches or teammates speak. Away from basketball, listen carefully to parents, teachers, friends, and god's word. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "What does good listening look like?" and "Who saw someone demonstrate listening today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference. Name a few examples you saw some of the players do today.

Short Prayer

God, thank You for those who teach us. Give us listening ears and teachable hearts. Help us listen before we speak. Amen.

TEAMWORK

"Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don't need you.' The head can't say to the feet, 'I don't need you.' " - 1 Corinthians 12:20-21

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is teamwork. Our Bible reference is 1 Corinthians 12:20-21. God gives people different gifts, and we need one another. In basketball, pass, defend, rebound, and encourage. everyone can help. Away from basketball, include others and look for ways to help. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "How can you help your team without scoring" and "Who saw someone demonstrate teamwork today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference. Give a few examples for what you saw today.

Short Prayer

God, thank You for giving each person different gifts. Help us work together and remember that every teammate matters. Amen.

RESPECT

" Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." - Philippians 2:3–4

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is respect. Our Bible reference is Philippians 2:3–4. Jesus teaches us to consider others, not only ourselves. In basketball, respect teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials, even when you disagree. Away from basketball, treat every person with kindness. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "How can you show respect when you disagree" and "Who saw someone demonstrate respect today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference. Give a few examples yourself.

Short Prayer

Jesus, help us respect our teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, families, and teachers. Let our words and actions honor You. Amen.

ENCOURAGEMENT

"So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is encouragement. Our Bible reference is 1 Thessalonians 5:11. God calls us to build one another up. In basketball, celebrate teammates and encourage them after mistakes. Away from basketball, notice someone who needs a kind word. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "What could you say after a teammate makes a mistake" and "Who saw someone demonstrate encouragement today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference. Give a few examples yourself.

Short Prayer

God, help us notice when others need encouragement and use our words to build them up. Amen.

RESPONSIBILITY

"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities." - Luke 16:10

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is responsibility. Our Bible reference is Luke 16:10. God wants us to be faithful with what He entrusts to us. In basketball, bring your gear, care for equipment, listen, and do your job. Away from basketball, be someone others can count on. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "What responsibility do you have to practice" and "Who saw someone demonstrate responsibility today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference. Give an example yourself.

Short Prayer

God, help us be dependable and take care of the people, opportunities, and things You give us. Amen.

COURAGE

" This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." - Joshua 1:9

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is courage. Our Bible reference is Joshua 1:9. We can be courageous because God is with us. In basketball, take the shot, guard someone, and try difficult skills. Away from basketball, do what is right even when you feel nervous. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "What skill takes courage for you to try?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate courage today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference. Give a few examples yourself.

Short Prayer

God, remind us that You are with us. Give us courage to try, learn, and do what is right. Amen.

PERSEVERANCE

" Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing." - James 1:2-4

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is perseverance. Our Bible reference is James 1:2-4. God can use difficulties to help us grow. In basketball, after a miss or turnover, keep playing. next play. Away from basketball, do not quit just because learning is difficult. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "Who can give any examples of what you should do after a mistake?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate perseverance today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference.

Short Prayer

God, help us keep trying, learn from mistakes, and trust You as we grow. Amen.

SELF-CONTROL

" But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" - Galatians 5:22-23

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is self-control. Our Bible reference is Galatians 5:22-23. The Holy Spirit helps us grow in self-control. In basketball, do not pout, argue, or lose your temper after a call or mistake. Away from basketball, pause before responding when upset. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "What are some things you can do before reacting?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate self-control today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference. Give an example.

Short Prayer

Holy Spirit, help us control our words, bodies, and attitudes. Help us pause and respond in a way that honors You. Amen.

UNSELFISHNESS

" Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

5You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had." - Philippians 2:4-5

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is unselfishness. Our Bible reference is Philippians 2:4-5. Jesus showed us how to put others before ourselves. In basketball, make the extra pass and celebrate when a teammate scores. Away from basketball, help someone without asking what you will receive. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "When is passing better than shooting?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate unselfishness today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference.

Short Prayer

Jesus, help us think about others, share the ball, and find joy when our teammates succeed. Amen.

HONESTY

" The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth." - Proverbs 12:22

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is honesty. Our Bible reference is Proverbs 12:22. God values truthfulness, even when truth costs us. In basketball, play fairly and admit when the ball went off you. Away from basketball, tell the truth when you make a mistake. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "Why does honesty require courage?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate honesty today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference.

Short Prayer

God, help us tell the truth, play fairly, and admit our mistakes, even when it is difficult. Amen.

CONFIDENCE

" For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength." - Philippians 4:13

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is confidence. Our Bible reference is Philippians 4:13. Our confidence is in Christ, not in being the best. In basketball, try the skill you practiced without fearing mistakes. Away from basketball, remember your worth is not decided by winning or impressing others. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "What is the difference between confidence and bragging?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate confidence today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference.

Short Prayer

Jesus, thank You that our worth comes from Your love. Help us trust You and use the abilities You have given us. Amen.

PATIENCE

"So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." - Galatians 6:9

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is patience. Our Bible reference is Galatians 6:9. Growth takes time, so we should not tire of doing good. In basketball, keep practicing skills that do not come quickly. Away from basketball, be patient with yourself and others while learning. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "Who can give me a skill that improved because you kept practicing?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate patience today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference.

Short Prayer

God, thank You for being patient with us. Give us patience as we practice, learn, and help one another. Amen.

LEADERSHIP

"But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." - Mark 10:43–45

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is leadership. Our Bible reference is Mark 10:43–45. Jesus showed that real leaders serve others. In basketball, lead through hustle, listening, helping, and example. Away from basketball, help others instead of bossing them. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "How can you be a leader without being the captain?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate leadership today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference.

Short Prayer

Jesus, help us lead through effort, kindness, listening, and service to others. Amen.

HUMILITY

**"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves." -
Philippians 2:3**

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is humility. Our Bible reference is Philippians 2:3. Our abilities are gifts, not reasons to believe we are better. In basketball, win without bragging and lose without excuses. Away from basketball, be confident, thankful, and willing to learn. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "How can you celebrate while remaining humble?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate humility today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference.

Short Prayer

God, thank You for our abilities. Keep us thankful and teachable, and help us never put others down. Amen.

GRATITUDE

"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus." - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Coach's 60-Second Message

Today our character word is gratitude. Our Bible reference is 1 Thessalonians 5:18. God has given us much to be thankful for. In basketball, thank parents, coaches, teammates, officials, and volunteers. Away from basketball, notice God's blessings and thank those who help you. Let's look for ways to live this out today.

Closing Huddle

Ask: "Who helped make this season possible?" And "Who saw someone demonstrate gratitude today?" Let two or three players answer, affirm their examples, and repeat the Bible reference.

Short Prayer

God, thank You for our team, families, coaches, and the opportunity to play. Help us notice Your blessings and show gratitude. Amen.