

COACHES MANUAL

Developing Character



BADGES FOR BASEBALL



TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES
CHANGE KIDS' LIVES

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
About the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation	
About <i>Badges for Baseball</i>	
An Coach's Legacy: The Ripkens	
GETTING STARTED	7
The Guiding Principles of the Foundation	
Keep It Simple	
Explain Why	
Celebrate the Individual	
Make It Fun	
Game Plan	
Group Management & Game Facilitation Techniques	
LESSONS	
Lesson 1: Sportsmanship	17
Lesson 2: Teamwork	21
Lesson 3: Leadership	25
Lesson 4: Communication	31
Lesson 5: Respect	35
Lesson 6: Resilience	39
Lesson 7: Personal Responsibility	43
Lesson 8: Work Ethic	47
Lesson 9: Developing Good Life Habits	51
Lesson 10: Choosing to Be Healthy	55
Lesson 11: Choosing Your Teammates	59
Lesson 12: Choosing Your Future	63
WRAP UP	67
Reinforcing the Lessons	
Resources	
Acknowledgements	
National Health Education Standards	
Connect with Us	

INTRODUCTION

About the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation

During his 37-year career with the Baltimore Orioles organization, Cal Ripken, Sr. taught the basics of the game and life to players big and small. After he passed away, his sons Cal and Bill recognized that not every child is lucky enough to have such a great mentor and role model. In this spirit, the Ripken family started the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, in 2001.

By teaching kids how to make positive choices no matter what life throws at them, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation strives to help underserved youth fulfill their promise and become healthy, self-sufficient, and successful adults.

About *Badges for Baseball*

The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation provides program, resources, training, and support to community-based organizations across the country that directly impact the lives of at-risk youth. *Badges for Baseball* pairs police officers and kids together to play and learn. Using baseball and other team sports as the hook, law enforcement officers become the coaches and mentors. Once youth are engaged and the lines of communication opened, the *Badges for Baseball Coaches Manual* provides law enforcement mentors with a vehicle to begin meaningful conversations with kids who need it the most.

Every day, law enforcement officers see what happens when people make poor choices. Every day, kids struggle to make the right ones. Through discussions about choices today and the consequences to which they lead tomorrow, combined with activities demonstrating these lessons, youth learn to make productive decisions for their future.

All *Badges for Baseball* curriculum materials and suggestions for implementation are available at RipkenFoundation.org.

A Coach's Legacy

Throughout the *Coaches Manual*, you'll see the word "uncommon." We have included stories of uncommon people that you can use as inspiration to help kids make their own uncommon impact on the world through positive choices. To explain what uncommon means to us, we would first like to introduce you to the uncommon individual who inspired our work.

Cal Ripken, Sr. was a player, coach and manager in the Baltimore Orioles organization for nearly four decades. He coached many major league greats—among them, his sons Bill Ripken and Cal Ripken, Jr. Bill Ripken played in the majors for 12 years. Hall of Famer Cal Ripken, Jr. is known as the Iron Man for breaking Lou Gehrig's record of consecutive games played.

But Cal Ripken, Sr.'s true legacy has little to do with baseball—baseball was just his medium. His legacy was coaching players who were not just great athletes, but great teammates and great people. He would often say, "Baseball's just a walk of life. Everything you do in this game you do in life, and everything you do in life you do in this game."

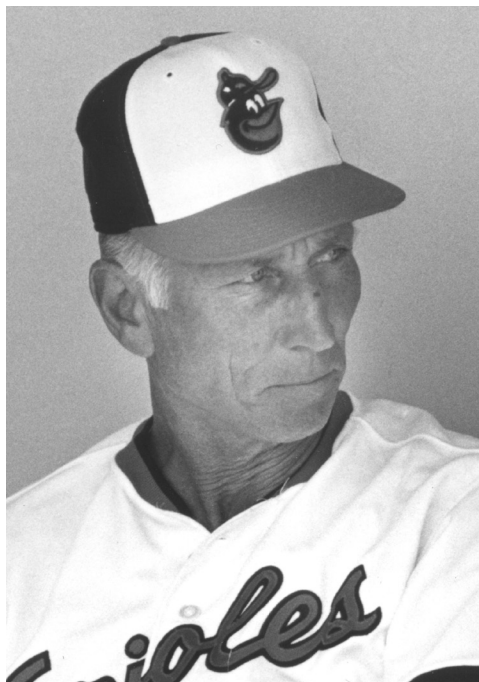
Cal Ripken, Sr. was effective as a coach, not only by coaching "The Ripken Way," but also because he lived and played by the same life lessons he taught his players. Here's what made him uncommon:

Aim above the mark.

As Cal Ripken, Sr. liked to say, "Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect." He was dedicated to doing things the right way, and he held high expectations for everyone he coached.

Commit and follow through.

The hallmarks of integrity and perseverance that are synonymous with the Ripken name are so because Cal Ripken, Sr. led by example. He did the sliding drills first, drove the team bus, dragged the infield. He never asked someone else to do anything he wouldn't do himself.



Cal Ripken, Sr.

INTRODUCTION

Ask why.

Cal Ripken, Sr. believed that in life, no one is born a winner a loser, but we are all born choosers. To learn, we ask why. To persevere and succeed in life requires asking “why not?” Cal Ripken, Sr. once wrote, “**One of the oldest beliefs in baseball is that hitters are born, not made. However, the player with fearless determination and desire can improve with correct practice and good instruction.**”

Grow your team.

Cal Ripken, Sr. helped the people around him become better. He didn’t just coach big league players; he also coached at baseball clinics for inner city kids. He knew that winning a game wins you one game. Building a team of big league people is what allows you to win in life.

After Cal Ripken, Sr. passed away in 1999, Bill Ripken and Cal Ripken, Jr. co-founded the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation to carry on his legacy and reach more kids by growing their team to include uncommon coaches like you.



You can find Cal Ripken, Sr.'s original baseball manual at [RipkenFoundation.org](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org) under Resource Portal. Sign up for your free account today to access this and other resources for coaching youth.

INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED

LESSONS

WRAP UP

GETTING STARTED

Guiding Principles of the Foundation

Cal Ripken, Sr. was a player, coach, and manager in the Baltimore Orioles organization for nearly four decades. He developed great players and, more importantly, great people through his style of coaching. No matter what you are teaching, you can use these four key ideas as your guide.

Keep it simple

Lessons on the field and in life are best learned when presented in a simple manner. Teach the basics and keep standards high.

Explain why

By helping kids understand the connections between everyday decisions and real-life outcomes, we can help them make smarter choices which guide their futures.

Celebrate the individual

When kids are encouraged to be themselves, respected for their opinion, and asked to share it, they are more likely to have a higher self-esteem and a better feeling of self-worth.

Make it fun

If kids aren't paying attention or participating, how much are they learning? Whether it's using a game to teach a concept or motivating kids with a little friendly competition, keeping kids engaged is essential.

INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED

LESSONS

WRAP UP

GETTING STARTED

Game Plan

Badges for Baseball is designed to introduce law enforcement officers to kids as coaches and mentors—thus why we refer to adults as coaches throughout this manual. If your organization is not a public safety agency, nor currently working with one, we encourage you to begin a partnership to implement the Badges for Baseball program. In addition to connecting youth with additional caring adults and positive role models on a regular basis, this serves to enhance the relationship between youth and law enforcement in the community.

The *Badges for Baseball Coaches Manual* is designed to help you facilitate discussions with your kids and to get them up and moving.

Most of the activities in this book will require a decent amount of space for the kids to run around, such as a gym or a field, so keep that in mind.

COACHING TIP: *Familiarize yourself with each lesson and its activities before you meet with the kids so you can be prepared.*

Each lesson has an accompanying worksheet that youth can complete during the Lesson in Action portion. The *Badges for Baseball* resources can be downloaded at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal).

Each lesson is broken down into the following components:

Lesson Goal

The goal is the big message of the lesson that needs to be emphasized. This goal is also printed on the corresponding youth worksheet. It is recommended that a participant read the lesson goal aloud to the group.

The lesson goal is followed by a brief overview of the concept for coaches.

Warm-Up

Each suggested game acts as an opportunity for the students to release energy before focusing on the remainder of the lesson. Each warm-up also relates to the lesson.

Uncommon Lesson Keys

These three keys are the core message for the lesson. These keys relate directly to the lesson goal, but are more in depth. Each key should be shared with the students at the beginning of the lesson. The keys are also printed on the corresponding youth worksheet.

Key Words

Key words are the strategic words that are important to understanding the lesson concept. The key words are listed on the youth worksheets without the definition, but definitions are provided in the *Coaches Manual* for your reference. Depending on the age of your kids, you may ask them to try to define them first or simply share the definition with them.

Breakin' It Down

This section provides questions to help start a conversation and get kids to think critically about the key concepts and how they relate to life on and off the field. Encourage youth to do the majority of the talking and to use the questions to prompt discussion or bring them back on track if needed.

Person/Team Spotlight

The Breakin' It Down section also includes a brief story about a person or team who applied this trait in real life. The goal is for youth to be able to relate to these people and see how their uncommon choices led to positive outcomes.

Lesson in Action

These exercises are designed to reinforce the key lesson messages while providing kids with the opportunity to think critically, put these concepts into practice, and work collaboratively. Some require one or two sentence responses while others involve simple projects or games. Each lesson has an accompanying “Badges for Baseball Worksheets for Youth” (available on the Resource Portal at [RipkenFoundation.org](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org)). Youth can use them to write down their thoughts before having a group discussion, or you can have them answer the questions individually on the worksheet.

If you are using the *Badges for Baseball Coaches Manual* together with a team sport, you can also look for teachable moments during games related to the lesson and ask questions that help kids connect the dots. Team sports are fun, keep kids moving, and naturally provide concrete examples of the lessons in *Badges for Baseball*.

GETTING STARTED

Group Management & Game Facilitation Techniques

As adults working with children, we have the opportunity to use sports and games to teach life lessons just as Cal Ripken, Sr. did through baseball. The more your kids trust and respect you as a person who genuinely cares about them—not just someone who has the official title or authority—the stronger that relationship is and the more effective you will be as a coach and mentor.

The four tenets of “The Ripken Way” will help you build that relationship as you coach kids towards success both on and off the field.

But regardless of whether you’re running relay races or teaching communication skills, no one is learning anything unless they feel safe and are actively engaged! It doesn’t matter whether you are on the field, in a gym, or in a classroom.

Here are the key features of an environment that promotes fun and learning:

- Active participation by every group member at all times
- Respect for every individual
- Allows for teachable moments
- Clear and consistent expectations for behavior
- Encourages inclusion and relationship-building

By fostering environments of respect and inclusion, you’re creating a healthy community where a child feels safe to be themselves and to grow.

However, when you’re working with large groups, it can be chaotic at times, and it can be easy to lose the group’s attention. Structure is key so that the kids are always moving and doing something. Idle time is your worst enemy because you lose their focus. Make it easier on yourself and plan something for every minute.

Here are some other strategies—from set-up to close—that you can use to structure inclusive activities in a way that keeps kids engaged, excited, and coming back.

1. Set-Up

- Having your boundaries set up prior to the arrival of the kids helps avoid downtime and allows you to get into the game right away.
- Have all necessary equipment out and ready prior to the arrival of the youth. Ensure that all equipment works and you know how to use it.
- If you are working with kids who have varying abilities or special needs, plan ahead of time to select or modify activities so that they will be able to participate.

COACHING TIP: For more information on modifying activities so that kids with special needs can participate, check out *Healthy Choices, Healthy Children: Adaptive Sports*, available at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal.

2. Get everyone's attention

Signals can help you get the group's attention and indicate a change in activity, whether it's starting a new game, making an announcement, etc.

- **If you can hear my voice**
 - *"Clap once if you can hear my voice"*
 - *"If you can hear my voice, do the queen's wave"*
 - *"If you can hear my voice, snap your fingers four times"*
- **Match me**
 - *Put your hands on your head, put your hands on your hips, put your hands on your knees*
- **Rhythm clap**
 - *Do a rhythm clap, students echo the clap, clap to a different rhythm, student echo, and so on*
- **Countdown**
 - *Raise your hand in the air and count down from 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, freeze. Have players freeze as their favorite superhero, vegetable, etc.*

3. Get everyone into position or into teams

Here are some signals you can use if you need participants to gather in a circle, stand on the foul line, etc.:

- **Circle up**
 - *Clap while counting: "Let's circle up in 10, 9, 8..."*
 - *Give high fives to three different people and then get into a circle*
- **Sequence Touch**
 - *Have the students run and touch three different objects that are readily available (something green, a wall, something blue, etc.), give two high fives then form a circle around you.*

COACHING TIP: Asking participants to find objects or high five other players before getting into a circle can also buy you an extra minute if you need to move equipment!

If the game requires you to group kids into pairs or teams, **grouping games** are a great way to encourage inclusion and to help kids build relationships beyond their normal group of friends.

- **Clap to Groups**
 - *Participants need to listen to the number of claps the instructor gives. Then they form groups that have as many people as claps. For example: 4 claps means 4 people per group. You can make it challenging by clapping different times before landing on the number you need for groups.*
- **Line of Silence**
 - *Have everyone line up in a certain order (shortest to tallest, youngest to oldest, alphabetical, etc.) without talking. This will help split them up from their friends. Then count off the kids for however many teams you need.*
- **Candy Bag Grab**
 - *Put 4 or 5 different kinds of candy in a bag. As kids arrive, ask them to choose a piece of candy and get into groups based upon the type of candy they have. For example, you may have a lollipop group, a mint group, a sour candy group, and a taffy group. Or use multicolored candies.*

GETTING STARTED

- **Birthday Month**
 - Ask kids to find group members who all share the same birthday month as they do. If needed, combine multiple months to even out teams.
- **Deck of Cards**
 - Groups can be arranged by the same number (Aces, Kings, Queens, 10's, 4's, etc.) or by the same suit (hearts, clubs, spades, diamonds) or by odd numbers and even numbers. There are so many variations when using a deck of cards. For large groups, you may have to use more than one deck.
- **Index Card Pairs**
 - Make index cards ahead of time. On each pair of cards, write a famous pair that serves as a way for participants to form pairs. For example, write "peanut butter" on one card and "jelly" on the other. Other ideas: spaghetti and meatballs, Badges and Baseball
- **Board Game Locator**
 - Do you have a few extra board games lying around? Grab a few of the game pieces from each box and give one of them to each of your participants. Participants find their group members by locating others who have the same pieces from the same game.

COACHING TIP: For more fun games and ways to play them, check out the Resources section in the back of this book. Our friends at Playworks are especially skilled at making it fun and have collected many children's games that you can play with your kids at playworks.org/games.

4. Introduce the game or activity

- **Name of the game**
- **Goal of the game**
 - Explain why!
- **3-5 Rules**
 - Keep it simple! When introducing a new game for the first time to a group, it's important to keep your directions clear and concise.
- **Boundaries**
 - Physical boundaries (in/out, circle of cones, etc.)
- **Start/Stop Signals**
 - Ask kids to pick two words. One will be the start signal, and the other will be the stop signal.
 - The game will begin when I say, "Cheeseburger."
 - Stop playing when I say, "Hot Dog."

Use these techniques to keep kids engaged and ensure comprehension while you're explaining the activity:

- **Call and response**
 - Ask them to repeat the name of the game, rules, etc.
 - Introduce a rule and ask for two thumbs up if they understand that rule. Do not move onto the next rule until everyone gives you two thumbs up.
 - Ask participants to trace or point out the boundaries.
- **Two snaps and a clap**
 - After each new rule, or after each response in a group discussion, have everyone snap their fingers twice and clap once.

5. Practice round (for games)

Once the rules are said, it's important to not take any questions, but rather play a practice round for kids to work out the details on their own. If they have questions after the practice round, you can address them at that time.

During the practice round, you may notice the need to introduce new rules for safety reasons or because the game is going faster or slower than it should. Or, maybe the game has a lot of rules, and you want to introduce a few at a time.

- Use a signal or stop word to get everyone's attention and pause the game.
- Introduce the new rule.
- Use the start word to restart the game.

6. Play the game

After the practice round, play the game for real!

Make it fun for everyone: When playing games with large groups of kids, it's important to make sure everyone is included at all times. If a student gets out of a game at the beginning and has to wait around for the end before they can play again, they can lose interest in participating altogether.

Structure your games so once a player is out, he or she can perform a certain task to reenter the game instead of sitting out. The goofier the better! Remind kids that sometimes in life we get "out," but if we're willing to put in the effort, we can find a way to get back in the game. Here are a couple ideas:

- **Positive Talk**
 - *Have the player say something positive about 3 other players.*
 - *Have the player say 3 things they like about themselves.*
- **Physical Activities**
 - *Have the player do 5 jumping jacks or push-ups.*
- **Sequence Touch**
 - *Have the player run and touch something green, something yellow, etc. before returning. Or have them get high fives from 3 different coaches or players.*

Don't forget about cheering! If you are playing a game in teams, have teams create cheers that they do before each round. Award points for most creative cheer, loudest cheerers, and for those who are cheering throughout the game for one another.

7. Close

Use the agreed-upon stop word or signal to end the game. Celebrate a game well-played with a closing cheer. For example, "All hands in. 'Uncommon!' on three."

Be creative! Encourage the group to come up with unique high fives, claps, or cheers that they can use to celebrate.

GETTING STARTED

More tips to make it fun and celebrate the individual

- Let kids have input in the activities they like best
- Use visual tools (diagrams, cones, props, etc.)
- Set the mood with music (just listen to the lyrics ahead of time to ensure they're age-appropriate)
- Celebrate the behaviors you wish to reinforce

Use these different game facilitation techniques with all of the games that you play with the children, but also in your interactions with them. Everyone will have more fun and you will be a more effective coach and mentor!

Here's an example of these techniques as applied to Quickball:

Learn how to play Quickball by watching the training video in our online Resource Portal at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal.

- 1) Opening Attention Getter:** If you can hear my voice, clap once...twice...three times.
- 2) Grouping Game:** Find a partner and circle around me in 10...9... (count down) Then split those partners up into 2 teams by assigning one partner as an orange and the other as an apple. Oranges are on offense and apples are on defense.
- 3) Game Explanation:**
 - *Name of the Game:* **Quickball**
 - *Goal of the Game:* **To have fun while learning basic baseball fundamentals and teamwork!**
 - *3-5 Basic Rules of Game:*
 - For the team at bat - Each player gets 1 pitch. If you hit it, run to first, second, third and hop back in line. Do not run to home plate. If you swing and miss, you run to first, second, third and hop back in line. Most importantly, make sure to place the bat down gently instead of throwing it!
 - **Points - If you hit over the boards, it's 10 points. If you hit over back wall/fence, it's 20 points. If you hit the pitcher, it's 50 points.**
NOTE: Hitting the pitcher with the foam Quickball helps kids learn to hit up the middle.
 - For the fielding team - Get the balls in the bucket before the runner touches second. For every ball that is in the bucket, you get 1 point!
 - The name of the game is Quickball and each inning is 90 seconds. The faster you move, the more turns you will have at bat.
 - After 90 seconds, the teams switch sides and now the defense team is up to bat. When a team plays both offense and defense that counts as one complete inning. Keep rotating and play as many innings as you wish.

GETTING STARTED

- *Boundaries:*
 - Offense – Players must stay behind the cone (3rd base side) until it's their turn to bat. Do not go near the batter, or you will get knocked in the head!
 - Defense – You can run all over the field to grab the balls, but you cannot run in front of the pitcher to grab them.
 - Fence – Black signs (some marked with QUICKBALL) act as the outfield fence. Place the signs 30-50 feet behind the bases.
 - *Start Game Signal:* **Game (inning) starts on Cheeseburger! (Have the group give you a start word.)**
 - *Stop Game Signal:* **Game (inning) stops when I count down from 10...9...8...Hot Dog! (Have the group give you a stop word.)**
 - *Call and Response for Game Rules:*
 - What's the name of the game?
 - What happens if you hit the ball? Miss the ball?
 - Where do you run after you hit the ball?
 - Do you run home?
 - Defense – where does the ball go after you pick it up?
 - What happens when you hear "Hot Dog"?
- 4) Practice Round**
- 5) Play!**

Lesson Goal

To realize that we cannot always change a situation; however, we can control our reaction to that situation.

This lesson will focus on sportsmanship, on and off the field. In sports and in life, we can't always change the situation we are in, but we can control our reaction to that situation. Sportsmanship is how a person reacts to the situation around them. An uncommon person understands that sportsmanship is about recognizing and understand that winning is secondary to participating. Doing the best you can in sports, in school, and in your personal life, is what life is all about. Winning and losing in sports is often out of your personal control. Much like the weather, we cannot control when it rains or when it's sunny, but we can control our reaction. Although we cannot always control the circumstances that come our way, we can control how we react to them.

Warm up: Bird's Nest

What you will need for this activity:

- Large open space
- 5 hula hoops
- 10-15 bean bags

Arrange five hula hoops about 25 feet apart in a square with one hoop in the center, this will be called the bird's nest. Place the beanbags (the eggs) in the center hoop.

COACHING TIP: *Keep it simple. Set up this space before the kids arrive.*

Divide the group into 4 equal teams. Assign each team a hoop/bird's nest.

COACHING TIP: *Prior to playing, refer to the "Group Management & Game Facilitation Tactics" for tips on breaking up a large group of participants.*

Explain to the group that each team's goal is to get 6 bean bags in their hoops. When told to start, the first person on each team runs to the center to grab a bean bag (one per turn). The player returns to his or her line and places it in their hula hoop; then the next player goes.

Players keep taking bean bags from the center hoop until empty, at which point players can take bean bags from each other's hula hoops. Players cannot defend their own hula hoop.

Game ends when one team has six bean bags or at the end of 5 minutes.



Keys to Sportsmanship

- Everyone has ups and downs in life but we all have the freedom to choose how we respond to a given situation.
- It is important that we learn to win and lose with kindness, consideration for our opponents, and humility in our words and actions.
- Being a good sport means acting professionally and showing a positive attitude.

Key Words

HUMILITY – not proud or bold; not thinking that you are more important than others

PROFESSIONAL – a person who is an expert at his or her work and shows a positive attitude towards it

Breakin' It Down

Today we are going to talk about sportsmanship.

- **What was frustrating about the game that we just played?**
 - Possible answers: each time we got an egg into our nest it would get taken out; we couldn't defend our nest; more than one team picked on our nest at a time
- **How did this make you feel?**
 - Possible answers: it made me frustrated/mad; it made me want to cheat; it made me not want to play

In sports, you can win or lose even if everyone is trying their best to win. Losing is as much a part of the game as winning. Sportsmanship applies to what you do on

and off the field. A **professional** is not just an expert at his or her work, but is someone who approaches work and life with a positive attitude. If you act professionally, then you are practicing good sportsmanship. It takes a mature attitude to celebrate the successes of others, especially if we are on the losing side.

Humility means not thinking you are more important than others—remembering that it's not all about you or even your team. You might feel bad if you lose or feel like bragging if you win, but good sportsmanship is about controlling those feelings and remembering that there are other people around you who also have feelings.



SPORTSMANSHIP

- **What behaviors show poor sportsmanship?**
 - Possible answers: throwing equipment; rubbing it in your opponent's face if you win; yelling at the referee when he or she makes a call you don't like
- **What behaviors demonstrate good sportsmanship?**
 - Possible answers: keeping a positive attitude no matter what happens in the game; complimenting the other team on playing well regardless of who wins; respecting the referee's call
- **Why is good sportsmanship important? How does it affect the way you feel while playing a game? How does unsportsmanlike behavior affect how you feel and play?**
 - Possible answers: unsportsmanlike behavior is distracting and can sometimes be hurtful to others; good sportsmanship allows you to focus on your goal; having a positive attitude feels better than staying stuck on the bad things that happened

Winning and losing applies to life as well. You can't always control the situations or problems you encounter in life, but you can control your reaction.

- **By a show of hands, who in here has played on a sports team?**
 - NOTE: If no one raises their hand, ask them this next question anyway.
- **How many of you would dream of helping the opposing team?**
 - Allow youth to raise their hands and answer the question. Afterwards, please share the story of Central Washington Women's Softball Team.

Spotlight:

Central Washington Women's Softball Team

In late April, 2008, two softball teams from the Great Northwest Atlantic Conference, Central Washington and Western Oregon were facing off against each other for the chance to play in the NCAA tournament. In their game, Western Oregon's Sara Tucholsky stepped up to the plate. On the second pitch of her at-bat, Sara struck a home run over the centerfield fence and began her trot around the bases, but she missed first base. As Sara turned back to touch first base, her right knee gave out and she collapsed to the ground. She had torn her ACL! The umpires discussed the rules with the coaches, telling them that assistance from coaches or trainers would result in an out, and if a pinch runner was used, Sara's home run would count as a single. That's when the coaches heard a voice ask, "Would it be okay if we carried her around and she touched each bag?" This came from the opposing team's first baseman, Mallory Holtman. This wasn't against the rules, so in an uncommon display of sportsmanship, Mallory Holtman and shortstop Liz Wallace carried Sara around the bases, stopping at each one so she could gently touch her foot to the base.

- **Why do you think this was an uncommon display of sportsmanship?**
 - Possible answers: they easily could have left her at first and not counted the home run; they acknowledged her hard work and performance; they helped her regardless of the team she was on

Sportsmanship in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show sportsmanship in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

What you will need for this activity:

- Optional: *Badges for Baseball Sportsmanship Worksheet* and pen/pencil for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

Allow groups 5-7 minutes to complete this exercise.

Choose a well-known professional athlete, and hang his or her picture up for everyone to see. You can also pick a couple different athletes from different sports, depending on what your kids' interests are. Then use these questions to decide whether each athlete practices good sportsmanship:

- **How does he or she handle difficult situations, such as making mistakes, following the rules, losing games, dealing with controversial calls by officials, reacting to poor performances by teammates, or hearing criticism from fans, the media, and opponents?**
- **What messages do these actions send to kids, fans, teammates, and opponents about sportsmanship?**
- **Does he or she practice good sportsmanship? Why?**

Lesson Goal

To understand that we can often accomplish more with the help of others than we can on our own.

*This lesson focuses on teamwork. Teamwork extends far beyond just the baseball field or basketball court; it is everywhere in our lives. There are many different types of teams, large and small. From classroom project teams, to the school band, to the baseball team, these are all examples of people working together to accomplish a common goal. At some point in our lives, we are on a team, whether in school, at work, in our family, or on the field. In order to be successful, teammates need to be able to work toward a common goal. It is also important to realize that every decision we make, as an individual or as a teammate, has a **ripple effect**. The **consequences** can affect our family, friends, or teammates. Regardless of the activity, we can have more success and more fun with teammates and friends.*

Warm up: Blanket Volleyball

What you will need for this activity:

- Per team of 8 kids
 - o 1 volleyball or soccer ball
 - o 2 large blankets
- Large open space like a gym or field

Break the group up into teams of 8. Within each team, 4 players will get one blanket. The other half will hold the other blanket. Players should each grab a corner of the blanket with their hands as close together as possible.

Have teams line up on the mid-court line so that each group holding a blanket is opposite from the other half of their team. Ask everyone to take 5 giant steps backwards so they are about 10-15 feet apart.

NOTE: Make sure you have two straight lines of teams.

For all the groups on one side, place a ball in each of their blankets. When you yell, "Toss," teams with the ball will lower, then raise the blanket, tossing the volleyball to the other half of their team, who will then use their blanket to catch the volleyball before tossing it back. If all teams complete 3 throws, ask the side who started with the ball to take 3 more steps back from the line, and then continue.



When a team drops the ball, they must choose one player to step out of the game. This player must perform a task before reentering the game.

COACHING TIP: *Players should always have a way to reenter the game. Refer to the “Group Management & Game Facilitation Tactics” for ideas to have players reenter.*

The remaining players must leave their hands in the same corner of the blanket as when the game began. If a team has only one player left, this player needs to wait until a teammate has returned, then they can begin again.

Game should end after 5 minutes, or when one team has not dropped the ball.

Keys to Teamwork

- Our decisions and actions can affect the team’s or group’s success in a positive or negative way.
- To be successful, we need to be good teammates, on and off the field.
- Working with others helps us learn and grow as individuals.

Key Words

RIPPLE EFFECT – a series of events that are produced or caused by a single action
CONSEQUENCES – the effect, result, or outcome of something that has already happened

Breakin’ It Down

Today we are going to talk about teamwork and what it means to be a team player.

- **Thinking about the game we just played, what was so difficult about this activity?**
 - Possible answers: tossing the ball far and high enough; trying to catch and throw with less than four people; making sure we were moving together at the same time to catch or toss the ball
- **How does working as a team make this game easier?**
 - Possible answers: it makes it easier to catch the ball; the blanket is bigger when four people are holding it
- **Does anyone know what Olympic game is called the “Miracle on Ice”?**
 - Allow youth to answer, and then proceed to tell them the story of the 1980 US Olympic Men’s Hockey Team.

TEAMWORK

Spotlight:

1980 US Olympic Men's Hockey Team

The year was 1980. Olympic ice hockey had been dominated by the Soviet Union since 1964. With a team of young players selected just months before the Olympic Games, most people gave the American team a slim chance for success. When Team USA officials asked Coach Herb Brooks why it appeared he didn't pick the best players in the country, he responded, "I'm not looking for the best players; I'm looking for the right ones."

Picking young college players, Coach Brooks faced an internal team struggle. Many of his players were bitter rivals who couldn't stand each other. Players continued to identify themselves by saying "I play for Boston University" or "I play for the University of Minnesota." Coach Brooks needed them to understand that the name on the front of their jersey was far more important than the name on the back. One day, after the team showed poor teamwork at an exhibition game, Coach Brooks made them skate sprints from one side of the rink to the other, asking them repeatedly what team they played for. It took hours for the first player to answer, "I play for Team USA." Practice was dismissed.

On February 22, 1980, millions of Americans tuned in to the Olympics to watch Team USA take on the heavily favored Soviet Union squad. The challenging work of uniting the team paid off, and Team USA won! They accomplished what had seemed impossible through an uncommon demonstration of teamwork.

- **After hearing this story, why was it important that the US men's hockey team worked together as teammates?**
 - *Possible answers: if they continued to fight with each other they wouldn't have been able to win; they needed to work together towards one team goal*
- **Why are teammates so important?**
 - *Possible answers: when a group works together, you usually get more ideas on how to do things; team sports can't be played alone; playing with friends is more fun; working with others helps me meet new friends*

We have talked about the positive things about teams, but sometimes there are people in your group or on your team who are not the best teammates. Many times, these people are unsure of their abilities or feel they cannot meet the expectations of their teammates, coaches, or their families and feel uncomfortable about being a teammate. These people can be unkind to others or act selfishly.

Our actions can affect, or have **consequences**, for other people. Every time we act, there is a **ripple effect** of consequences, like the ripples on the water when you throw a pebble into a pool or pond. These effects can be negative, or they can lead to a positive outcome, as in the case of Team USA winning the game.

- **How can you be a better teammate?**

Teamwork in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show teamwork in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

What you will need for this activity:

- Open space
- Hula hoop
- Optional: *Badges for Baseball* Teamwork Worksheet and pen/pencil for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

Allow groups 5-7 minutes to complete this activity.

Ask the kids to form a circle. Place a hula hoop over one kid's arm, and instruct everyone to join hands. Without letting go of anyone's hand, the team must find a way to move the hula hoop all the way around the circle. The hula hoop cannot touch the ground or the group must start over.

When the group successfully completes the challenge, ask them the following questions. (Kids can use the worksheet to think about and write out their responses before a group discussion.)

- **What did you have to do to complete that task?**
- **Did everyone pass the hoop in the same way?**
- **How did you communicate with each other?**

It's important to remember that everyone had to work together to pass the hoop. Not everyone passed the hoop the same way either. It's important to celebrate the individual during this activity and point out how each person passed the hula hoop and how each person communicated with their teammates.

Lesson Goal

To recognize the qualities of positive leadership and to strive to adopt those qualities for ourselves.

*The focus of this lesson is leadership. Leadership is an important quality that we all have in varying degrees. However, not everyone is a leader all the time – and that’s okay. To be successful, we all need to be able to recognize the qualities of positive and negative leadership. We often think of leaders as leading others to do positive things. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. There are leaders who urge others to do negative things. Leaders can have either a positive or negative influence on others depending on the type of leadership they provide. Leaders who earn the respect of their peers and get others to follow them have a responsibility to lead wisely. Uncommon leaders are those who demonstrate **integrity**, **courage**, respect, and **commitment** towards positive goals.*

Warm up: Calling the Shots

What you will need for this activity:

- Basketball court
- Basketballs (1 for each group of 5)
- Pencils for each participant
- Paper for each participant, plus extra

Hand out a piece of paper and a pencil to each kid. Then use a grouping game to split the kids up into teams of 5. If your numbers don’t split perfectly into 5, go ahead and form smaller groups with the remaining kids.

Once the kids are in their teams, give them 2 minutes to design a basketball play where everyone on their team touches the ball before they can shoot at the basket. When the 2 minutes are up, have each team designate one person to be the leader. The leader’s responsibility will be to teach the rest of the team the play so they can run it correctly.

Pass out one basketball to each team and allow the leaders 2 minutes to explain and practice the play with their teammates. After the 2 minutes are up, see if the teams can successfully run their play based on the leaders’ directions. It’s okay if a team doesn’t complete the task in 2 minutes.

COACHING TIP: *Make it fun and celebrate the individual! You can also have the kids design a play for another sport they enjoy like football or soccer or choreograph a few dance moves.*



Keys to Leadership

- Leaders earn respect and get others to follow them with their words and actions.
- There are both positive and negative leaders. We have the freedom to choose which type of leader we want to be, when leading, and which type of leader we want to follow.
- Leadership requires us to work hard, respect ourselves and others, and have the integrity and courage to make good choices.

Key Words

INTEGRITY – to act with honesty and sincerity, always trying to do what is right

COURAGE – able to face difficult situations or circumstances in spite of fear

COMMITMENT – to make a promise or pledge to complete something to the best of your ability

Breakin’ It Down:

Today we are going to talk about leadership. All of us know people who act as leaders, but some lead in positive ways and some in negative ways.

- **Thinking about the game that we just played, why was it important to listen to the leader on your team?**
 - Possible answers: it made getting the job done easier; having just one person speaking was easier to listen to than having everyone talk; we worked better as a team when we had someone we could rely on
- **What were some things that your leaders did to help your team accomplish its goal?**
 - Possible answers: gave us direction; did the play themselves before asking us to do it; organized team members into different roles; encouraged us

Positive leaders show **commitment** by fulfilling a pledge to complete something to the best of their ability, such as helping their teammates accomplish a goal.

- **Who in your life is a positive leader and what do they do that makes them a positive leader?**

Positive leaders practice **integrity**, or always trying to do what is right, which includes respecting other people. Leadership also takes **courage**, the ability to face difficult situations or circumstances in spite of fear.

- **Can anyone tell me who Nelson Mandela is?**
 - Allow youth to explain who they think Nelson Mandela is before helping them out with the description.

LEADERSHIP

Spotlight: Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was South Africa's first black chief executive, and the first to be elected in a fully representative democratic election. For generations, the government of South Africa had practiced a system of apartheid, or racial segregation.

Under apartheid, Mandela had been discriminated against. As a leader of the anti-apartheid movement, he had also been imprisoned for nearly 30 years. He was an uncommon leader because he chose to put his feelings aside and put his country first. As president, he focused on what South Africans—all South Africans—needed in order to heal and move the nation forward.

In 1995, the South African rugby team, the Springboks, made it to the finals of the Rugby World Cup. The country was still deeply divided, and at the time, rugby was a predominantly white sport in South Africa. Many South Africans saw the team as a symbol of the apartheid. It wasn't easy, but Mandela rallied the entire country to support the Springboks, using the slogan, "one team, one country." The team won the World Cup, but also won a huge step towards healing and bringing the nation together.

- **After hearing about who Nelson Mandela is, why do you think he is an uncommon representation of a positive leader?**
 - *Possible answers: he led people with positive words and actions; he created positive change in his country; he brought people together; he tried to do what was best for all South Africans, not just certain groups of people*

Remember, there are negative and positive leaders. When we get the chance to lead, we can choose which kind of leader to be. It is important to know that not everyone has to be a leader. Whether we lead or follow, we should always do so with trustworthiness, respect for others, a strong work ethic, commitment, personal responsibility, and courage to do the right thing.

Leadership in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show leadership in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

What you will need for this activity:

- 2 rooms and an open space, such as a hallway
- 8-10 building blocks per team
- Optional: *Badges for Baseball* Leadership Worksheet and pen/pencil for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

Allow groups 7-10 minutes to complete this drill.

Divide your group into teams of 3-4. Have each team designate one person as the leader, another as the builder, and the others as runners. Give leaders and builders 4-5 blocks each.

One of the rooms will be for leaders, with builders in the separate room and runners in the hallway. If you do not have separate rooms, you can use partitions or a large open space so that each group is far enough apart that they cannot see what the others are doing from their location.

The leader is placed in a separate room and uses building blocks to create a shape. He or she then goes into the runners' area and tells the runners how to build the shape. The runners never see the shape.

Runners then go into the builders' room and describe the instructions to the builder on their team. The builder then attempts to build the same shape as the leader. The runners then describe the object to the leader and see how close the shape is to the leader's shape.

If it does not sound like the builder is close, the leader should work with the runners to convey a description that will help the builder build the same shape.

Afterwards, bring everybody back together to discuss the following questions:

- **How important was communication in each individual's job and to the team as a whole?**
- **If the first attempt to match the shape was not successful, how did the leaders help their teams complete the challenge?**
- **How could leadership and teamwork be improved in each group?**

COACHING TIP: *Being able to communicate a vision and get a team to work together towards a common goal are important skills for leaders. Learn about other important skills in our Healthy Choices, Healthy Children: Civics & Leadership, available at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal.*

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED

LESSONS

WRAP UP

INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED

LESSONS

WRAP UP

Lesson Goal

To understand that effective communication is a two-way process that helps us to be successful in all aspects of life.

This lesson will focus on the importance of communication and how being an effective communicator helps us succeed. It is important to realize that communication is much more than simply talking to someone. It is a combination of many verbal and nonverbal actions – speaking, listening, body language, signals, eye contact, etc. Uncommon communicators take all of these into account to make sure they understand others and that others can understand them. Encourage your students to practice a broad range of communication skills.

Warm up: Be My Eyes and Ears

What you will need for this activity:

- Large open area for kids to move around in
- A bandana or blindfold
- A bucket or basket
- 3 small objects that will fit in the bucket/basket

Do not set up the objects or the bucket ahead of time. Ask for a volunteer brave enough to don the blindfold.

Divide your playing area in half. One half will be the “field.” Lead the blindfolded player onto the field. With the help of his or her team, the blindfolded player will have to pick up the 3 small objects and put them in the bucket. Set out the items.

The rest of the team should stand in the other half of the playing area, facing the spokesperson and the field. The team can see the blindfolded player. However, they are not allowed to talk!

Then ask for a volunteer to play the team spokesperson. The team spokesperson will stand in front of the team with their back the field and is not allowed to turn around to look at the field or watch the blindfolded player. However, the spokesperson can see the team.

Through motions and hand gestures, the team needs to communicate nonverbally to the spokesperson so that the spokesperson can shout out directions to the blindfolded player. Play for 5 minutes or until the task is complete.



Keys to Communication

- Using strong communication skills, in school, sports, and life is often the difference between being successful or not. Understanding that people communicate differently is key to improving the decisions that we make.
- We express ourselves by communicating our thoughts and emotions in two primary ways: verbally (with words) and non-verbally (with actions, such as eye contact and hand gestures).
- To be an uncommonly effective communicator, we need to be active listeners. This means giving our undivided attention to a speaker in a genuine effort to understand the speaker's subject matter and point of view.

Key Words

ACTIVE LISTENER – giving undivided attention to a speaker in a genuine effort to understand the speaker's point of view

BODY LANGUAGE – the gestures, poses, movements, and expressions that a person uses to communicate

Breakin' It Down

To interact with your friends, families, teachers, teammates, and coaches, it's important to have strong communication skills.

- **During the game, what were some of the different ways teammates communicated effectively?**
 - Possible answers: spokesperson spoke loudly and clearly; team acted out where the blindfolded player needed to go; team members gave a thumbs up to confirm that the spokesperson gave correct directions

Good communication is more than words, it includes positive body language.

- **Besides words, what are different ways that you can express yourself and communicate with someone?**
 - Possible answers: smiling or frowning; waving hello or goodbye; the tone of your voice

As communication is a two-way process, it also requires active listening. When we are speaking to someone, we want to show them that we are actively engaged in their conversation. We can do this by looking the speaker in the eye, waiting for the other person to finish talking before responding, asking follow up questions, nodding our heads, etc.

- **Thinking back to the game we just played, how did you feel when your teammates did not understand you?**
 - Possible answers: frustrated, angry, I didn't know how to get them to understand me

COMMUNICATION

- **Who knows of a football player named Derrick Coleman?**
 - *Allow youth to answer the question. Afterwards, please share the story of Derrick Coleman and the 2013 Seattle Seahawks.*

Spotlight:

Derrick Coleman and the 2013 Seattle Seahawks

At the beginning of the 2013 season, fullback Derrick Coleman made his Seattle Seahawk debut. When he made the starting roster, questions were raised about how Coleman, who is deaf, was going to be productive in the league, and how he was going to help lead this team to a championship.

When Coleman debuted with the Seahawks, he was the first deaf offensive player in the NFL. But having a hearing impairment is not what makes him uncommon; it is his willingness to persevere and tackle whatever obstacles come his way—on the gridiron and in life.

As a kid, Coleman learned how to read lips. Playing football further motivated him to improve his lip reading ability, a skill that has served him well. Although he wears hearing aids, football stadiums are noisy places. During the 2013 season, Coleman and his teammates worked together to communicate effectively on the field. For example, Quarterback Russell Wilson would mouth play calls at the line, always making sure to turn around so that Coleman could see and read his lips.

The 2013 season wasn't easy for the Seattle Seahawks, but Head Coach Pete Carroll kept reminding his players to be limitless, that they were constantly underestimated by people who did not see how special they truly were. Through effective communication and teamwork, the Seahawks proved the naysayers wrong and won Super Bowl XLVIII!

In football, it doesn't matter how far you can throw a football down the field if your teammate doesn't receive it. Being an effective communicator means making sure that the other person has understood you, and that you can understand the other person.

- **What are some ways you can use positive body language and active listening to communicate more effectively?**

Communication in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show communication in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

What you will need for this activity:

- An open space
- A piece of paper, pencil, and colored pencils for each team
- Optional: *Badges for Baseball* Communication Worksheet and pen/pencil for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

Allow groups 5-7 minutes to complete this drill.

Divide the group into teams of 5-6. Next, give each team a pencil, piece of paper, and colored pencils. Instruct the teams that you will give them a topic. Teams will have to draw on the sheet of paper and then color it in. The catch is that team members cannot talk amongst themselves. Also, only one team member can work on the sheet at a time and whenever you whistle (or give the agreed-upon signal), another team member has to pick up where the previous team member left off.

Teams cannot discuss strategy, and every member of the team must get a chance to draw. Topics to draw should be very broad, such as a picnic or a baseball game.

After this activity, ask participants the following questions:

- **What was the most difficult part about this activity and how did you solve this?**
- **How were you able to communicate with one another and complete the task?**
- **What are some ways you will use positive body language and active listening to communicate more effectively?**

RESPECT

LESSON

5

Lesson Goal

To understand the importance of treating all people and their belongings as they would like to be treated.

This lesson will focus on respect – for ourselves, for others and for the community. Respect can sometimes be an emotionally charged word, often leading to negative consequences. An uncommon person earns respect through a number of ways. Some of those ways include hard work, positive actions towards others, consideration, and dedication towards something.

Warm up: Tell Me About It

What you will need for this activity:

- Paper for each participant
- Pens or pencils for each participant
- Tape

Have all the kids write their name on a piece of paper, then tape it to their desk or to the table in front of them.

Instruct the kids that they will have 5 minutes to walk around the room and write something positive on the papers for 10 of their teammates.

They should write something specific that they respect, admire, or like about that person. Encourage them to choose kids whom they don't hang out with every day.

COACHING TIP: *Walk around with the children to ensure that they are focusing on the positive things that they like about one another.*

Once they have written something down for 10 different teammates, they should return to their seats.

Give them a few minutes to read all the comments on their paper then gather their attention for a quick discussion.



Keys to Respect:

- You are valuable. Take care of yourself, your belongings, your school, and your community.
- A respectful attitude is one that is kind, polite, and honest.
- Respect is earned; to be respected, you must treat others with equal respect.

Key Words

CONSIDERATION – *to have the best interest of others in mind; careful thought*

Breakin’ It Down:

Respect is a word we often hear and, like many other words, it can mean different things to different people. Today we will discuss some ideas on how respect is connected to how we treat ourselves, our communities, and others.

- **What does it mean to treat other people with respect? Please provide examples of specific behavior.**

Today, when we discuss “respect,” we mean being treated with kindness and consideration. Treating others respectfully means treating them how they would like to be treated.

- **Would anyone like to share a comment they received during our activity today that they liked?**
 - *Give time for a few examples.*
- **When you read those comments, how did it make you feel?**
 - *Possible answers: happy; positive; encouraged; I didn't know people liked that about me*
- **Knowing how much better it felt to be respected for something, how do you think you can make an effort to respect others more or treat others the way you would want to be treated?**
 - *Allow youth to respond.*

In sports, coaches and athletes should always treat referees, umpires, opposing players, and their fans with respect. This means never using trash talk, name calling, put-downs, or doing/saying things to embarrass others. Let your game speak for itself!

Even if we don't agree with someone or aren't friends with someone, we can still show them respect, because showing an individual a respectful attitude will show them that you are kind and polite. This extends to showing respect to other people's belongings, to our community, and to the spaces we share with others. This is one way in which we can earn the respect of others.

- **Does anyone know who Joe Ehrmann is?**
 - *Allow youth to answer the question. Then share the story of Joe Ehrmann.*

RESPECT

Spotlight: Joe Ehrmann

As a boy, Joe Ehrmann tried to gain respect through victories in sports. When he was 12, he had a substitute gym teacher named Eddie Abramowski. Abramowski had played college football and was a trainer for the Buffalo Bills. Ehrmann wanted to impress him. Every day in gym class, Ehrmann tried to show he was the biggest, fastest, and strongest. Still Abramowski paid him little attention. So he tried harder, even getting aggressive. Finally, Abramowski pulled Ehrmann aside after class one day. Ehrmann expected the teacher to yell at him and show him who was boss. Instead, Abramowski said, "I'm not sure why you ran over that kid. But I've been around sports for a long time. I have never seen a kid your age with your athletic ability. And everyone follows you. You don't even realize how much of a leader you can be. I hope someday you realize it. Get your act together, young fella, and use your gifts for the good."

Abramowski was an impressive athlete, but that moment earned him Ehrmann's true respect. Along with many other coaches, Abramowski helped him see that respect is not about you but about how you make others feel about themselves.

Ehrmann later played professional football for 13 years as a defensive lineman for the Baltimore Colts and the Detroit Lions. While his athletic achievements are impressive, Ehrmann has earned respect as an uncommon coach and leader because he learned how to respect others.

- **How did the teacher earn Joe Ehrmann's respect?**
 - *Possible answers: he spoke to Joe in a kind way even though he was disappointed in him, he showed that he respected Joe's athletic and leadership abilities even if he thought Joe was not using them positively, he helped Joe realize that he was capable of better*

Many things in life are earned through our hard work, dedication, and the manner in which we treat others. Respect is one of the most valuable things we can earn from our peers and mentors. When we work hard and show respect for others, ourselves, and for our community, we can succeed.

Respect in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show respect in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

What you will need for this activity:

- Water balloons (at least 1 for every 2 participants, plus extra)
- Outdoor space or a mop for clean-up
- Optional: *Badges for Baseball* Respect Worksheet and pen/pencil for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

NOTE: Fill the water balloons ahead of time so you can get right into the activity.

Allow groups 7-10 minutes to complete this drill.

Have everyone find a partner. Partners should stand facing each other and close enough they can touch. Each time you say, "Go!" (or the starting word chosen by the group), the participants will hand/toss/throw their water balloon to their partner. Partners pass the water balloon each time the coach says, "Go!" or gives the signal. After every pass, one line of kids must take 5 steps back. The game continues until one team is left or teams have reached the maximum distance for the activity.

Once the youth have completed the activity, talk to them about the following things:

- **If you didn't treat the water balloons with respect when tossing them back and forth, what were the consequences?**
- **What makes you feel respected? How would you like others to treat you?**

COACHING TIP: *Explain the why! Remind your kids that we need to treat everyone with respect. Explain that people can be fragile like the water balloons you were just tossing back and forth. When we treat someone without respect; we are rude, inconsiderate, neglectful, have poor manners, etc., we can really upset or hurt them—sometimes without meaning to or without realizing it. This is especially true the further away you are from someone, or essentially the less you know about the other person. That's why it is important to treat everyone with respect and consider how our words or actions might affect them. This includes how we treat their belongings and the spaces we share with them. For more, check out Healthy Choices, Healthy Children: Rise Above Bullying, available at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal.*

RESILIENCE

LESSON

6

Lesson Goal

To understand the value of a positive, patient, and tolerant attitude in our relationships and within ourselves to help us practice resilience.

The term **resilience** means to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens to us. Resilience begins with how we think about ourselves and our current situation. *Stinkin' thinkin'* refers to the negative thoughts and actions that we direct toward others as well as to ourselves. The focus of this lesson is to identify and avoid behaviors and actions that may hurt others emotionally or our own self-esteem and to overcome these negative feelings. The term *stinkin' thinkin'* is used as a catch phrase for students to identify negative attitudes. Students can easily identify *stinkin' thinkin'* when they get down on themselves or when the actions of one person degrade another. It is important to encourage students to avoid thinking or speaking negatively about themselves as well as others. When a student practices resilience, he or she avoids *stinkin' thinkin'*. The way in which we see ourselves and treat others, ultimately, is a reflection on our ideals and values.

Warm up: Basketball Challenge

What you will need for this activity:

- Cones for each participant
- Enough space for kids to run around and dribble basketballs
- Basketballs for each participant

COACHING TIP: *Keep it simple and make it fun for everyone! Prior to playing, refer to game facilitation tactics for tips on introducing and playing new games.*

Give each kid a cone and have them form a circle. Then ask everyone to take a few steps back to form a circle large enough for everyone to move around freely inside of it, and place the cones in front of their feet. Divide the group in 2 even teams, such as by having the kids alternate calling out "stars" or "stripes" (or team names of your choice) one by one around the circle.

Explain to the kids that the goal of the game is to try and swat the basketball from all of the players on the court without stepping outside of the boundaries. The "Stars" can only dribble with their non-dominant hand, while the "Stripes" can only dribble with their dominant hand. If players dribble outside of the boundaries, they will have to complete a task (e.g. 5 jumping jacks) before they are allowed to reenter. Play for about 5 minutes.



Keys to Resilience

- Stinkin' thinkin' is when we think or speak negatively about ourselves or others.
- Instead of stinkin' thinkin', we can practice resilience by viewing challenges as an opportunity to become better.
- Resilience is when we are able to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens.
- When we are positive about our actions, decisions, and ourselves, we have the ability to inspire others to lead a more successful and happy life.

Key Words

RESILIENCE – the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens to us

STINKIN' THINKIN' – thinking or speaking negatively about others or about ourselves and not accepting others for their differences; connected to our attitudes

SELF-ESTEEM – how we think about ourselves; the confidence and satisfaction with yourself and who you are

Breakin' It Down

Today we are going to talk about resilience and how it can help us avoid stinkin' thinkin'.

- **What do you think I mean by the term stinkin' thinkin'?**
 - Possible answers: having low self-esteem; having bad thoughts; being mean to others; not being confident; not listening while others are speaking; talking bad about yourself or others.

Stinkin' thinkin' can be when we have thoughts or doubts about ourselves or when we communicate negative thoughts or attitudes towards others. If we doubt our ability to do something or doubt that we are good enough, we're demonstrating stinkin' thinkin'. If we have good self-esteem, however, meaning we feel confident and satisfied with who we are, we can be resilient in the face of challenges.

- **What do you think I mean by being resilient?**
 - Possible answers: becoming strong; bouncing back; recovering
- **Thinking back to the game we just played, did anyone see any examples of stinkin' thinkin'?**
 - Possible answers: getting down on myself because I wasn't as good dribbling with my non-dominant hand; I got really mad when I stepped out of bounds; I got upset when my ball got hit out of bounds
- **How about some examples of someone being resilient?**
 - Possible answers: I kept trying to dribble even after I got knocked out of bounds; I kept trying again and again; I did jumping jacks to get back in the game
- **Does anyone know what happened in American sports in 1947 that changed our country forever?**
 - Let the youth try and guess. After a few guesses, share the story of Jackie Robinson.

RESILIENCE

Spotlight: Jackie Robinson

Born January 31, 1919, in Cairo, Georgia, Jackie Robinson became the first African American player in the major leagues in 1947, signing with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Throughout his decade-long uncommon career with the Dodgers, Robinson made advancements in the cause of civil rights for black athletes. While playing baseball, Robinson endured the worst kinds of stinkin' thinkin' such as being called terrible names. Instead of stinkin' thinkin', he showed resilience by choosing to be respectful and to focus on the game. He persevered, and in 1955, he helped the Dodgers win the World Series. In 1957 he retired with a career batting average of .311. Robinson died in Connecticut in 1972.

- **How did resilience help Jackie Robinson? How can resilience help us?**
 - *Possible answers: not everything is going to be the same in sport, and what is most important is how you deal with it; by being resilient and playing well, Robinson showed that African-Americans could be good baseball players; resilience allows us to do our best work rather than feeling down about ourselves*

Stinkin' thinkin' is all about attitude. Our attitudes towards others, toward our work, and towards ourselves often determine whether or not we are successful. If we work with a positive attitude and think positively about ourselves and others, we can achieve uncommon results. We can become resilient to anything!

Resilience in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show resilience in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

What you will need for this activity:

- *Badges for Baseball Resilience Worksheet* (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)
- Pen or pencil for each participant

Allow youth 10 minutes to complete this drill.

Ask kids to think about a recent challenge or event where they had stinkin' thinkin' about themselves or others. They don't have to share what happened, but they should write down 3 specific examples of stinkin' thinkin' that they thought or said in response to that situation.

Then ask them to rewrite each of these examples of stinkin' thinkin' as positive statements. If participants are having trouble rewriting any of them positively, they should ask a teammate for help. Or, as a variation, you can have everyone find a partner and trade papers.

When the activity is complete, discuss the following with the youth:



- **Was it difficult to rewrite the stinkin' thinkin' examples as positive statements? Why?**
- **Were teammates able to help you practice resilience in this activity? How?**
- **What is something you might say the next time you're facing a similar challenge or situation?**

COACHING TIP: *Keep building on these skills with Healthy Choices, Healthy Children: Resilience, available at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal).*

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Lesson Goal

To understand that we, as individuals, are responsible for both the positive and negative consequences of our actions and decisions.

*This lesson will focus on personal responsibility. **Personal responsibility** relates to the choices we make and the effects those choices have on our lives. We are all ultimately responsible for the things we do and the positive outcomes or negative consequences that result. When things go wrong, there is a natural tendency to look for someone or something responsible for our failure. Rather than looking for somewhere else to place the blame, we should think about our own actions to see what role we may have played in our own problem. Ultimately, we are responsible for all of our actions.*

Warm up: Popcorn Relay Race

What you will need for this activity:

- Per team of 5-6 kids
 - o 4 plastic or paper cups
 - o 4 thick rubber bands
 - o 4 paperclips
 - o 1 shallow box (shoe boxes will work)
- 1 thumbtack or small nail
- 1-2 big bags of popcorn (packing peanuts would also work)
- Ruler

NOTE: Prepare the cups ahead of time so that when the kids arrive, you can start the activity right away. Use a thumbtack or a small nail to poke a hole in the center of each cup bottom. Push one end of a thick rubber band through the hole and into the cup. Slip a paperclip on the end of the band inside the cup, and gently pull the other end until the paperclip rests on the bottom of the cup, the rubber band anchored in place. (The rubber band will be slipped over the toe of the player's shoe to hold the cup in place.)

Determine a starting line and then set the large, shallow boxes 5 yards beyond the starting line, opposite the teams.

When the youth arrive, break the kids up into equal teams, ideally with about 5-6 kids per team. Designate one member of each team to be the person who fills up the cups with popcorn. These players will stand alongside their teams, behind the starting line.



7

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

INTRODUCTION

Instruct the first 2 players on each team's line to slip the popcorn-filled cups over their shoes. At the whistle blow (or whenever you say "Go!"), they must sprint to their team's box and empty their cups into it, trying to lose as little popcorn as possible along the way.

Racers run back to tag the next teammate in line and that person must then run to the team box with newly-filled shoe cups. Racers who have completed must give their shoe cups to the next player in line so they can be filled with popcorn.

The relay continues for 3 minutes or until one of the bags is emptied. The popcorn in each box is then measured with a ruler (or by cups). The team with the most is declared the winner.

COACHING TIP: *Remind the kids that by accepting responsibility for our actions, we contribute to the success of the entire group.*

GETTING STARTED

Keys to Personal Responsibility

- There are always positive outcomes or negative consequences directly related to our actions or decisions.
- By accepting responsibility for our actions, we contribute to the success of the entire group, whether it's a class, a team, or an entire community.
- Responsible people are respected and try to follow through with all commitments and tasks, without making excuses if they fall short of expected outcomes or results.

LESSONS

Key Words

RESPONSIBILITY – to have control over or be in charge of something

POSITIVE OUTCOME – a desirable or encouraging result of a decision or action

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCE – an undesirable or harmful result of a decision or action

Breakin' It Down

Personal responsibility can mean a lot of different things. It can mean taking responsibility for your actions, positive or negative. It can mean being responsible and doing the right thing for yourself. Or it can even mean being responsible for others who may depend on you. Today we will talk about the different ways you can practice personal responsibility.

WRAP UP

- **Who can give me an example from the warm-up that demonstrates personal responsibility?**
 - Possible answers: throughout the race I had to try my hardest even if I lost some popcorn, I couldn't give up because my teammates were depending on me
- **After you went, did that affect how you worked with your team?**
 - Possible answers: I wanted to help my teammates and offer suggestions on how they could do better; I wasn't as mad when popcorn spilled because I knew how hard it was

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- **Can anyone share an example of a time when you took responsibility for your actions?**
 - *Possible answers: I borrowed a friend's clothes and got a stain on it so I offered my friend one of my shirts; I forgot to do homework one night and told the teacher instead of making up an excuse; I took something that didn't belong to me so I returned it and apologized*

COACHING TIP: *If students are having difficulty coming up with examples, have students talk about the consequences of their action and how taking responsibility helped resolve the problem. Similarly, discuss how trying to avoid consequences by blaming others or lying is the opposite of taking responsibility.*

Personal responsibility applies to any decision you make or any action you take. It's up to you to decide if that decision is right or wrong, positive or negative, or in the best interest of you or the team.

- **How many of you have ever been new to a school or to a team and how did that make you feel?**
- **Have any of you ever reached out to a new student before and talked to them on their first day? Why or why not?**
 - *Allow students to share brief stories, and then tell them about Rachel Scott. Please review the story ahead of time and adjust as needed given the age of your youth.*

Spotlight: **Rachel Scott**

Rachel Scott was the first student killed in the Columbine High School shooting in 1999. After her death, stories poured in from her peers about the impact she had on their lives. She was just 17, but her legacy lives on because of how she lived her life. Rachel understood at a young age that her actions had consequences, and she tried to make sure her actions would have a positive outcome for others. She demonstrated personal responsibility by reaching out to other students who were different, who were picked on by others, or who were new at her school. Rachel was uncommon in that she not only took responsibility for herself but also for the influence she could have on others and she chose to use this influence in a positive manner. In doing so, her legacy is a chain reaction of kindness that continues with all of the people she inspired to lead their lives in way that has positive outcomes for others as well as themselves.

Personal responsibility means trying to make sure that your actions have positive outcomes, for yourself and for others.

COACHING TIP: *In addition to taking responsibility for how we treat other people, it is also important to practice personal responsibility in all areas of our lives, such as when managing our money. To help your kids apply personal responsibility towards being self-sufficient, check out Healthy Choices. Healthy Children: Financial Literacy available at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal.*

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Personal Responsibility in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show personal responsibility in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

Allow 5-7 minutes to complete this activity.

What you will need for this activity:

- *Badges for Baseball* Personal Responsibility Worksheet (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)
- Pen or pencil for each participant

These quotes are on the worksheet, but you can also write them on a board for everyone to see.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." - Anne Frank

*"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."
- Edmund Burke*

*"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Ask participants to choose one of these quotes and write a response to its author that explains why they agree or disagree with the statement. Kids should reference their own experiences and insights garnered from the group activities and discussions of responsibility.

After everyone has written their responses, ask for a few volunteers to share the quote they chose and why they agreed or disagreed with the statement.

Lesson Goal

To recognize that to be successful in life it takes hard work, energy and commitment to do your best and finish what you start.

This lesson will focus on the importance and value of a strong work ethic and how it strengthens our prospects for success in life. No matter what we do in life, hard work and dedication will contribute to our success. Whatever we do, whether it is schoolwork, sports, music, or an afterschool job, we should work hard at it and always strive to do our best. The harder we work, and the more we try to do our best, the more success we have.

Warm up: Three-Legged Race

What you will need for this activity:

- Large open space
- Bandana or scarf for every two kids

Divide the group into teams of 6 players. Ask everyone to find a partner on their team and then give each pair a bandana.

Once given the bandana, assist them in tying their ankles together. (If there is an odd number of participants, you can participate or tie three players together.)

Explain to the group that the object of the game is to adapt to the challenge of not being able to move both legs freely, while still racing as quickly as possible. You must work together with your partner to get to the designated line and turn around and get back to the start line to tag the next pair on your team.

The first team to have all of their participants finish and sit down wins!



Keys to Work Ethic

- Work ethic is our ability to dedicate ourselves to take on a task or goal and complete it no matter how difficult it may be.
- A strong work ethic shows others that you can be counted on to get the job done.
- If you find something you love, no matter what it is – dance, music, painting, or athletics – work hard at it with a positive attitude.

Key Words

WORK ETHIC – a belief in the dignity and benefit of work; the commitment and desire to complete tasks

DEDICATION – to have a strong commitment or passion for something you are doing or believe

Breakin’ It Down

Today we are going to discuss work ethic.

- **What does good work ethic mean to you, and who in your life have you seen show good work ethic?**

Work ethic is about being personally accountable and responsible for the work that you do – you are responsible for it, you should do your best. But it doesn’t stop there; it’s also about being able to adapt to a new situation and powering through and completing a task to the best of your abilities.

- **Thinking back to the three-legged race, did anyone see any examples of hard work or dedication?**
 - *Possible answers: working with my partner to finish the race; working together to adapt to the situation; even if we fell we picked ourselves back up to finish the race*
- **If you weren’t able to achieve this task, did you give up, or did you keep working hard towards achieving it?**
 - *Allow youth to answer.*
- **How does the absence of work ethic in your actions affect you and those around you?**
 - *Possible answers: I don’t do as well in school as I can when I don’t put much effort into studying or homework; I let my teammates down because I should have practiced more*
- **Do any of you know the story of the Tuskegee Airmen?**
 - *Allow kids to answer the question before sharing the story of the Tuskegee Airmen and their contributions.*

WORK ETHIC

Spotlight: Tuskegee Airmen

Before 1940, African Americans were barred from flying for the US military. But with the help of civil rights organizations and the black press, that all changed. An entirely African-American squadron was formed and was based in Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1941. This uncommon group of men became known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice throughout the war to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II. Time in and time out, they proved that they could fly and that they were an integral part of the success of the Allied Forces in the war. Through their hard work and determination, the Tuskegee Airmen's achievements paved the way for full racial integration in the US military.

- **Can someone give me an example of how the Tuskegee Airmen showed uncommon work ethic?**
 - *Possible answers: even though they were told they couldn't fly, they still didn't give up on what they wanted and accomplished their goal; they dedicated themselves to a task and despite racial prejudice they still believed in it and got the job done*

The Tuskegee Airmen took their responsibilities in war seriously. Despite the fact that they were facing serious racial prejudice, they believed in fighting for their country and seeing that task through. They put in the extra time, work, and effort necessary to become some of the top pilots in the military.

Work Ethic in Action

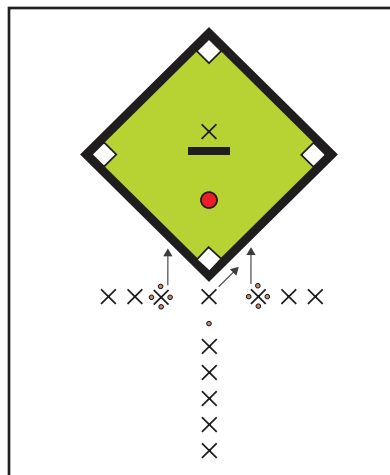
NOTE: Please use the activity below to show work ethic in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

Allow groups 20-30 minutes to complete this drill.

What you will need for this activity:

- Baseball/softball field or a large open space
- A set of throw down bases
- A kickball
- 9 dot cones
- Optional: *Badges for Baseball Work Ethic Worksheet* and pen or pencil for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

Set up the field for kickball. Place one dot cone 10 feet behind home plate. (Players on the kicking team will line up behind this cone while waiting their turn.) Then use 4 cones to create a square about one-third of the way up the 1st base line. Use the remaining cones to create another square on the 3rd base line, so that the field is symmetrical. These squares will be the fielder's boxes.



- Divide the group into 2 even teams. We recommend having an adult be the pitcher for the entire game.
- Have the first team line up behind the dot cone behind home plate; they will be the kicking team.
- Have the other team split into two even groups and line up behind the two squares down the 1st and 3rd base lines; they will be the fielding team.
- One at a time, each member of the kicking team will get one kick and will have to run around the bases as fast as they can.
- Two members from the fielding team (one on each side) will step up into the square prepared to run.
- As soon as the kicker kicks the ball, both members of the fielding team in the boxes will start running towards the ball.
- The goal of the fielding team is to have both members touch the ball and return the ball back to the pitcher before the kicker gets around the bases.
- The fielding team cannot throw the ball to each other or to the pitcher; they must run to their teammate then to the pitcher. After they bring the ball to the pitcher, they can return to the end of their lines.
- The goal of the kicker is to get around as many bases as possible before the fielding team gets the ball back to the pitcher.
- Each base reached by the kicker before the pitcher has the ball is worth one point (ex. kicker gets to 3rd - 3 pts, home run - 4 pts).
- Once each member of the kicking team gets to kick, add up all the points and switch.
- The team with the most points at the end of the inning wins!

Once youth complete the game, ask them the following questions:

- **How did having good work ethic help in the game?**
- **What were some strategies your team developed to be successful in this game?**
- **What are 3 ways that you can improve your work ethic in sports, in school, or at home?**

DEVELOPING GOOD LIFE HABITS

Lesson Goal

To recognize that building good daily habits will help us do well and avoid potential barriers to our success.

The focus of this lesson is to learn to develop good life habits. What does that mean? Good life habits are the actions we take on a regular basis that help us succeed. Whether it's brushing our teeth regularly, practicing a sport the right way, or finishing your homework before watching TV, everything we do is better if we practice good life habits. Bill Ripken and Cal Ripken, Jr. recall their dad, Cal Ripken, Sr., saying, "Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect." We can practice something all day long, but if we are practicing it the wrong way, we won't be successful. The more we practice developing good life habits, whether it is studying for a test, practicing a musical instrument or playing a sport, the more successful we will be at whatever we set out to do.

Warm up: Simon Says

One person plays Simon, and the others stand facing him/her. Simon instructs the others to perform an action by saying, "Simon says, do this," then demonstrates what is to be done. The other children must imitate Simon.

NOTE: Coaches can play Simon at first until kids get the hang of it.

If Simon only says "Do this" while showing the action, the other players are not supposed to imitate their leader. Anyone who does so then steps out of the game. Players must also step out if they fail to imitate a certain action when they're supposed to.

COACHING TIP: *Keep it simple and make it fun for everyone! Refer to our game facilitation tactics for tips on how to get kids to stay active in the game once they are out.*

Simon's strategy is to get the game moving so quickly that the players fail to notice when he or she does not start the command with "Simon Says."

Play for 3 minutes.



9

DEVELOPING GOOD LIFE HABITS

Keys to Developing Good Life Habits

- It is much easier to prevent bad habits than it is to break them.
- Good habits become just as hard to break as bad habits.
- If we take care of the little things in our lives, we avoid the big problems.

Key Words

HABITS – patterns of behavior that are gained through repetition and practice

Breakin' It Down

Today we are going to discuss life habits.

- **What are some habits that you do and why do you do them?**
 - Possible answers: brush my teeth twice a day so I don't get cavities; finish my homework before playing so I have enough time; listen to upbeat music in the morning to wake up

Every good habit we have can help us prevent negative consequences. Remember, if we do the little things in life – we may avoid the bigger obstacles.

All of these habits, both good and bad, lead to positive outcomes or negative consequences. Just as bad habits when left alone can lead to a downward spiral, good habits lead to an upward spiral. We don't have to be perfect. However, the more "perfect practice" we do in our lives, the better we will be at everything we do, because "perfect practice makes perfect."

- **Think about a time when you have tried to change one of your habits. Was it hard? Were you successful? If so, how did you do it? If not, what should you have done differently?**

Sometimes the best way to change a bad habit can be to replace it with a good one. For example, if you have a habit of eating snacks when you watch TV, you don't have to stop but you can make sure to choose healthy snacks.

- **Have you ever been told that you couldn't do something? Why were you told this?**
 - Allow the kids to share their stories. After they have shared, or if no one wants to share, please share the story of Jaime Escalante and his students.

DEVELOPING GOOD LIFE HABITS

Spotlight: Jaime Escalante

In 1974, when Jaime Escalante became a math teacher in a low income, primarily Latino neighborhood of East Los Angeles, James A. Garfield High School was in danger of losing its accreditation. People barely expected these students to graduate, let alone take and pass a college-level advanced placement (AP) calculus exam. Yet that didn't stop Escalante from recruiting students into his classes, working with the principal and other teachers to transform the math department, and tutoring students for hours before school, after school, on weekends, and during summers. After five years, his first students took the AP calculus exam and two passed. By 1982, 18 of his students passed. Fourteen had their scores questioned by the Educational Testing Service. Of the 12 students who retook the test, all passed. Escalante's uncommon belief in his students challenged the expectations that the education system had for low income students. An uncommon teacher, he dared to ask why not and instilled in his students the habits they needed to succeed in math class and in life.

No one believed in the students in Mr. Escalante's class, yet he didn't let that stop him nor did he allow his students to use this as an excuse. He showed these kids that they could succeed by changing how they did things. By instilling positive and healthy life habits, Mr. Escalante's students were able to change their lives and alter the course thought to be predetermined for them.

Developing Good Life Habits in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show developing good life habits in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

What you will need for this activity:

- *Badges for Baseball* Developing Good Life Habits Worksheet for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal))
- Pen or pencil for each participant

Allow groups 10 minutes to complete this activity.

Each youth will create a Good Habit Guide. Youth can decide who they would like to make their guide for. It can be for a new teammate, new member at the club that they attend, or it could be for a younger sibling.

Youth will write a minimum of 5 good habits that they practice that help them achieve success. Youth will also need to explain why these habits help them.

Once the guides are complete, ask youth to share a few of their good life habits that help them and explain why these habits help them!

COACHING TIP: For ways to make good habits like exercise fun, check out *Healthy Choices*, *Healthy Children: Fitness*, available at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/Resource-Portal).

INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED

LESSONS

WRAP UP

CHOOSING TO BE HEALTHY

Lesson Goal

To identify and understand that eating healthy, avoiding dangerous substances and staying active helps us to achieve our goals.

This lesson will focus on choosing to be healthy. Choosing to be healthy refers to the choice we all make to be physically fit and to take care of our bodies. We all have the ability to choose what we do with our lives and the goals we hope to accomplish. However, very few of our goals are within reach without a healthy body and healthy mind. In order to be successful and reach our goals, we need to be healthy and treat our bodies with respect.

Warm up: Fun with Fitness Relay

What you will need for this activity:

- 16 dot cones (4 for each team)

Make four parallel lines of four dot cones each, roughly 10 yards apart from each other. The first cones will act as starting cones and the remaining three will be markers for where the kids need to stop and accomplish a task.

COACHING TIP: *Set up the dot cones prior to the kids arriving so you can devote your time to them when they arrive.*

Once you have the cones set up, divide the kids into 4 even teams. If teams are uneven, have the teams with one less player pick someone to go twice. Have each team line up behind their starting cone.

On your command, the first player in line will run to the first cone and do 10 jumping jacks. Once they have completed the jumping jacks, they will run to the second cone and do 5 sit-ups. After the sit ups, they will run to the last cone, do 5 push-ups, then run back to the end of their line and take a seat.

Once the first player has crossed the starting cones, the second player will go and repeat the process above. They will keep going until every member of the team has run the relay. The first team to complete the relay and be seated in a line wins!

COACHING TIP: *Encourage opposing teams to cheer one another on by having a cheering contest to see who can cheer the loudest.*



10

CHOOSING TO BE HEALTHY

Keys to Choosing to Be Healthy

- Our bodies are like cars. If we put good fuel in the engine and treat it right, it will perform the way we want it to perform. Fruits and vegetables are examples of good fuel. Snack foods that have added sugar and high fat content are not good for our engines!
- Staying away from dangerous substances like alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs will help us to reach our goals.
- If we use common sense and treat our bodies with respect, it will increase our ability to succeed.

Key Words

DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES – items such as alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, or other chemicals that are proven to do harm to our bodies

MODERATION – the ability to avoid extremes or the overuse of something; neither too much nor too little

Breakin' It Down:

Today we are going to talk about making good choices for your body.

- **Do you ever feel low on energy at school? How about after school? Does snacking help? Which snacks help boost your energy? Which ones drag you down?**
- **Why do you think people abuse drugs, alcohol, and tobacco despite what we know about the harmful effects?**
 - *Possible answers: they want to fit in with their friends, they don't think it will hurt them, drugs can make them feel good for a short while, they know about the consequences but think they will be able to quit before they have to face the consequences*

The bottom line is that any kind of drug, including cigarettes, prescription drugs that are not prescribed to you by your doctor, alcohol or illegal steroids can be bad for your body and your mind. There is long-standing evidence that tobacco, in any form, causes many deadly types of cancer as well as other serious diseases, including heart disease and emphysema.

Just as drugs and alcohol can hurt and hinder a person, taking care of our bodies by eating nutritious food and exercising regularly can help save a person's life.

- **Has anyone ever heard of Dick and Rick Hoyt?**
 - *Allow youth the opportunity to answer the question. Afterwards, please share the story of Dick and Rick Hoyt.*

CHOOSING TO BE HEALTHY

Spotlight:

Rick and Dick Hoyt

In 1962 Dick and Judy Hoyt were blessed with the birth of the first and only son, Rick. When Rick was born he was diagnosed with spastic quadriplegia, the most severe form of cerebral palsy. (Cerebral palsy is a group of disorders that affects a person's movement, posture, and balance. People with spastic quadriplegia have all 4 limbs affected, which often means that they cannot walk and have difficulty speaking.) Dick and Judy were told that their son had zero chance at a "normal" life. Still, the Hoyts worked tirelessly to give Rick all the opportunities in sports, education, life, etc. that a child without Rick's disability would have.

In 1977, Rick expressed that he wanted to participate in a 5 mile benefit run. Rick couldn't do the 5 mile run himself, so his father, Dick, agreed to help him run it. Dick had never run more than a mile before, but got behind Rick's wheelchair and pushed him all 5 miles to the finish line. That night, Rick told his father, "Dad, when I'm running, it feels like I'm not handicapped." This sentence marked the beginning of a life changing experience for Dick and Rick Hoyt.

In the past 37 years, Rick and Dick Hoyt have completed over 1,000 races. This includes triathlons (several at Ironman distances), marathons, and half marathons. Their athletic accomplishments have not only enriched Rick's life, but have benefitted Dick greatly as well. In the early 2000s, Dick suffered a mild heart attack. Afterwards, doctors revealed that if he had not been in such good shape, the outcome could have been very different.

- **How did exercise help Rick and Dick live fuller, healthier lives?**
 - *Possible answers: Dick has gone to unimaginable lengths to bring joy to his son; the two of them have worked together to make each other stronger; if it wasn't for the athletic training that Dick has done over the years with his son Rick, he could easily have died from his heart attack*

Choosing to Be Healthy in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show choosing to be healthy in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

What you will need for this activity:

- *Badges for Baseball* Choosing to Be Healthy Worksheet for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)
- Pen or pencil for each participant
- Optional: Grocery store flyers

The goal of this activity is for participants to plan and prepare a healthy meal for the entire group. Allow youth 10-12 minutes to complete the planning portion. You will need to schedule another time to prepare the meal, and of course, you will need to allow time to purchase food, etc.

NOTE: Know what is realistic given your budget so that you can actually follow through on preparing and sharing this meal. If your participants are more advanced math students, you could give them a budget and provide grocery store flyers with prices to help them plan a group meal. Remind them to consider the amount of any ingredient that would be required to feed the group.

CHOOSING TO BE HEALTHY

Explain the following to the group:

- The meal must be healthy.
- Participants must be able to prepare the meal on site (e.g. if you have younger kids or don't have a kitchen, you may want to stick to something simple like sandwiches).
- Any other parameters such as budget, equipment, food allergies, dietary restrictions, etc.

COACHING TIP: *Make it fun for everyone! It's no fun when you cannot partake in a group meal. Make sure to ask the group at the beginning about any food allergies or dietary restrictions. It's also important to find out the severity. Some people only have a reaction if they eat that food, so it is okay as long as there are other options, but those with severe allergies or restrictions may not be able to eat anything that has even come into contact with the same utensils. Let's make sure everyone can safely eat!*

Depending on the group size, you may want to divide participants into smaller groups. One group can pick 2 beverage options, one group can pick the entrée, one group can pick 2 side options, etc.

Example:

- Beverage options: water, skim milk
- Entrée options: turkey and cheddar sandwiches, peanut butter and banana sandwiches
- Sides: baby carrots with ranch dressing, orange slices, ants on a log (celery sticks with peanut butter and raisins)

COACHING TIP: *For healthy snack ideas and recipes, check out Healthy Choices, Healthy Children: Nutrition, available at [RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org/resource-portal).*

Once the group has created a menu for the meal, schedule a time when everybody can prepare and enjoy the meal!

CHOOSING YOUR TEAM MATES LESSON

Lesson Goal

To learn to choose teammates on and off the field that have values and goals you respect and who, in turn, respect your values and goals.

This lesson will focus on choosing friends who are positive influences. When we participate in sports or activities, there are times when we cannot choose our teammates, but we can choose our friends. Uncommon friends help us become better people and support positive results in our lives. Friendships that we are forced into or that are chosen for the wrong reason can lead to detrimental relationships. Sometimes we find out that a previous decision about a friend is a mistake because the friendship is leading to negative behavior. We have the right to change our minds. It is important to identify these situations quickly and avoid being affected by negative influences. When choosing friends, we should look for people who share our goals and values.

Warm up: Sharks and Minnows

What you will need for this activity:

- Enough space for all of the participants to run around
- 4-5 balls of any kind

The object is for the kids (fish) to get from one side of the court to the other without being tagged (eaten) by you or another mentor (shark) while the ball is in their hands. Once everyone understands the object of the game, ask them to line up on one side of the room or field.

Now ask your kids, "Who wants to be the big fish in the pond?" Select one or two participants and hand each a ball. Explain to your "big fish" that they are on their own team and that the ball can never leave their hands.

Divide the remaining kids into groups of 5 and allow each group to choose the kind of fish they would like to be. Explain that they are a "school of fish" and must work together to get to the other side.

In order to get to the other side safely, one member of your team (school of fish) must arrive at the other side with the ball in their hands. Schools of fish may move the ball between their team members.



CHOOSING YOUR TEAMMATES

NOTE: An adult should be the shark, so you can demonstrate the point of the activity by making sure to tag the "big fish in the pond."

If a fish is tagged with the ball in their hand, their team must walk to the side and discuss a different strategy. If a fish is tagged without the ball in hand, they simply need to do 5 jumping jacks in order to jump back in with their team.

Play for 5 minutes.

Keys to Choosing Teammates

- Every person with whom we associate is a teammate in some way. They can be friends, family, teachers, coworkers, or teammates.
- Teammates can have a positive or negative influence on our lives. It is important to identify the negative influences and avoid them.
- When choosing teammates, it is important to look for people who have values we respect, such as dependability, honesty, and trustworthiness.

Key Words

DETRIMENTAL RELATIONSHIP - an association or friendship with someone that is not beneficial or is harmful to our future

INFLUENCE - using words or actions to affect someone else's actions or decisions

Breakin' It Down

Today we are going to talk about your friends, teammates, and peers. We are also going to talk about qualities that make a good friend and teammate.

- **During Sharks and Minnows, what did you learn about the importance of teammates?**
 - Possible answers: the ones who were by themselves had a harder time getting across the reef; it was easier to pass the ball around and not get tagged if I had a team to work with; we were more successful when we passed the ball than with just one team member holding it the whole time, even if he or she was the fastest
- **Why was it harder for "the big fish in the pond"?**
 - Possible answers: he/she didn't have anyone to rely on, they thought they were the best but faced the hardest challenge

Once we've chosen our teammates, it is important to evaluate your relationship. In other words, it is important to determine if your teammates or classmates have a positive or negative influence on your life. Once you figure that out, you can make positive choices about your future.

- **Many people try to impress their friends. In what ways can this type of peer pressure affect relationships? Without naming names, where have you seen this in real life?**

CHOOSING YOUR TEAMMATES

Sometimes we make bad decisions because we want to be involved or are worried about being left out. Our own internal desire to be accepted can cause us to make poor decisions.

Since other people's bad habits can influence us, it is very important to identify those bad habits so we can avoid them and the negative influences they might have on us.

- **Have any of you ever had to say “no” to something that one of your friends wanted to do but that you felt was wrong? How did you say “no” to that person?**
 - *Possible answers: I just told them I didn't want to do it; I left so I didn't have to; I said it made me sick or that I was allergic to it; I said I had to go somewhere*

One way to determine if someone would be a good friend is whether or not they have values and goals that you respect. If you want to see what values and goals someone has, watch how they treat the people around them. Are they helpful, nice, and trustworthy? Do they always give their best effort?

- **What are some of the qualities you would look for in a friend or a teammate?**

Remember, you get to choose who your friends are, so it is important to surround yourself with uncommon friends who will encourage and support you.

- **When you get the opportunity to pick a team for a game or project, do you pick only your friends or do you pick the best people for the job?**
 - *Allow for youth to answer question, then share the story of Don Haskins and the 1966 Texas Western Men's Basketball Team.*

Spotlight:

Don Haskins and the 1966 Texas Western College Men's Basketball Team

Don Haskins was the head coach at Texas Western College, now known as University of Texas El Paso (UTEP), for 38 years from 1961 to 1999. When Haskins took the head coaching job at Texas Western, he recruited and started African American players, in a time when it was still common to find all-white college sports teams.

Coach Haskins was widely known for winning the 1966 Men's College Basketball Championship against the University of Kentucky by starting five African American players, and only playing African American players during that championship game. He believed in having a team filled with the best players, and not to base recruiting on the color of a player's skin, but on their skill level. His team endured their share of adversity during their championship season, including being heckled at opposing team's stadiums and racial slurs.

Coach Haskins was a positive influence on his team, and together, they achieved a national championship. After winning the championship, Haskins was quoted as saying, "I really didn't think about starting five black guys. I just wanted to put my five best guys on the court."

It is important to look beneath the surface when choosing your teammates. Despite the norm at the time, Coach Haskins made the uncommon choice to play the best players without regard to the color of their skin. He respected every one of his players as individuals, and in turn, they respected him.

CHOOSING YOUR TEAMMATES

Choosing Your Teammates in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show choosing your teammates in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

Allow 10-15 minutes for the youth to complete this activity.

What you will need for this activity:

- Paper for every participant
- Color pencils or crayons available for each participant
- Optional: *Badges for Baseball* Choosing Your Teammates Worksheet for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

Ask the kids to think about the positive teammates they have in their lives and to pick one. They can use the worksheet to begin writing out the qualities that make this person a positive teammate.

Ask them to use the paper to make posters celebrating the positive qualities that make this person an uncommon teammate, by writing the traits and drawing their shared interests and hobbies.

Ask youth to share their posters with the group. Encourage them to share their posters with the person they celebrate!

CHOOSING YOUR FUTURE

Lesson Goal

To understand that we all have the power to succeed in life and achieve the goals we strive toward.

This lesson will define what it means to have positive self-worth as well as inform participants that they have the power to make positive choices that lead to a successful future. Through hard work, determination, and a drive to succeed, we all have the power to become successful contributors to society. This lesson will use powerful examples – both positive and negative – to illustrate that no matter where we come from or what our circumstances are, we all have the power to be successful. It is important to note, Choosing Your Future refers to deciding on a path and setting goals, not necessarily planning specific events. We all have the ability to set goals, both short and long-term goals that can help us achieve our dreams.

Warm up: House of Cards

What you will need for this activity:

- A few decks of cards

Create groups of 5-6 and have them sit together. Give each group an even amount of cards, so that each group has 15-20 cards. Explain to them that you want them to work together to construct both the tallest and strongest house of cards possible and must use all of their cards.

Give the kids 5 minutes to build their house of cards.

COACHING TIP: *There is no right way for the teams to build their house of cards; however you would like to see them start with a large base and have it come to a point at the top, like a pyramid.*

When time is up or all teams have completed their houses, ask everyone to take a look at the different kinds of houses groups built and what types of structures worked best. (The idea is that a house of cards will be much stronger when it is built with a large base or foundation.)



12

Keys to Choosing Futures

- Be open to new opportunities, find what you love to do, and work at it.
- Stay away from things that are future killers like dropping out of school, doing drugs, getting involved with negative groups, or having an unplanned pregnancy.
- Stay positive and you'll be successful. None of us are born winners or losers – we are all born choosers, and you have the power to make good choices.

Key Words

FUTURE KILLERS – decisions, actions, and substances that hinder our ability to be successful and choose the path of our lives

Breakin' It Down

Choosing is more than just thinking about something. Making choices is more often about taking action on those things you think about. While being a kid means that you must accept some choices that caring adults make for you, there are choices that you can make for yourself. All choices, even small ones, contribute to attaining your goals.

- **When thinking about the house of cards that we just built, how could that relate to our lives and our futures?**
 - Possible answers: we need to have a strong base to accomplish our dreams; if you don't have a strong foundation, you won't be able to accomplish your goals

If we have a strong work ethic and make positive choices, we have the ability to achieve our goals. We can set short and long-term goals to achieve our dreams. Our short-term goals can help to achieve our long-term goals. Think of the house of cards that we just built: if we have a strong foundation, we are able to keep building upon it without it collapsing.

- **What are some of your long-term goals?**
 - Possible answers: to have a good job; to own a home; to have a family; to have a specific job
- **What are some short-term goals to help you achieve your long-term goals?**
 - Possible answers: do well in school, go to college, train with a professional, learn about others who have achieved the same goals
- **What happens if we do not achieve our goals or stumble on the way? What can you do? Who can you turn to for help?**
 - Possible answers: set new goals; ask a teacher, counselor, or a mentor for help; ask friends and family for help; try new things; learn new skills

CHOOSING YOUR FUTURE

We often face challenges or obstacles on the way to achieving our goals. Think about a star athlete getting injured or a talented singer losing their voice. These are unexpected challenges.

- **How can you deal with unexpected challenges? What about a different plan?**
 - *Possible answers: work hard at many different activities, do your best at school along with your extracurricular activities, try to make friends with many different types of people*

Spotlight:

You!

Use this time to share your story. The kids look up to you and want to hear from you!

Here are some things you might talk about:

- Your goals and how they've changed
- Different things you have tried
- Choices you made
- Challenges and how you overcame them

It's important for kids to see how different choices lead to different paths and opportunities. It's also important for kids to know that paths and goals can change—and that this is normal. By opening up about your own uncommon story, you are showing kids how they can choose their own futures.

Each of us has to overcome different obstacles at different times in our lives to accomplish the goals that we set for ourselves. Through hard work and determination, each one of us can seize the opportunities that come our way.

Choosing Your Future in Action

NOTE: Please use the activity below to show choosing your future in action, or use your regularly scheduled activity and look for teachable moments throughout it!

Allow the youth 20 minutes to complete this drill.

What you will need for this activity:

- A variety of old magazines, newspapers, books
- Poster board/construction paper for each participant
- Scissors for each participant
- Glue or tape
- Optional: *Badges for Baseball Choosing Your Future Worksheet* and a pen or pencil for each participant (download *Badges for Baseball* resources from RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal)

Explain to the kids that they will be making vision boards, using words and pictures, which reflect their vision of the future they are choosing. They can use the worksheets to prompt some ideas about what they want their future to include, or they can simply begin looking through the gathered materials for pictures that show what they want their future to look like.

CHOOSING YOUR FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

Encourage kids to use pictures, words, phrases or other creative images to show their aspirations and goals.

You can have everyone share their vision boards or simply have the group walk around to see their peers' visions for the future. Let the kids take their vision board home and encourage them to hang the poster in a place where they will see it every day to remind them of the positive future they are working towards.

GETTING STARTED

LESSONS

WRAP UP

WRAP-UP

Reinforcing the Lessons

"Perfect practice makes perfect." – Cal Ripken, Sr.

Uncommon people are all around us. They hold the doors for us at the bank, they sit down at lunch with the new kid, or they spend their Saturday afternoons teaching kids how to play baseball. They do not simply do what everyone else does; they do what they believe is right. They are in the newspapers and on TV, but they are also sitting right next to us at the dinner table and walking by us at the mall.

Keep it simple. Find the uncommon people in your life and those in the lives of your youth and share their stories to help reinforce these lessons.

Explain the why and celebrate the individual. Let your kids lead the discussions, and respect their opinions. Tie the lessons together and revisit them a couple weeks later.

Make it fun. Use sports and games as the hook to get kids thinking about the lessons further and to make abstract concepts concrete.

Continue to seek opportunities to help youth apply these lessons to different aspects of life. The *Badges for Baseball Coaches Manual* covers the life lessons that Cal Ripken, Sr. taught his children and players. However, the world is constantly evolving, and so are the challenges our young people face.

Therefore, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation also offers the *Healthy Choices, Healthy Children* curriculum, which includes editions on various topics (e.g. bullying, financial literacy, adaptive sports, resilience) so that you can help your kids apply the core lessons from *Badges for Baseball* to life off the field.

All *Healthy Choices, Healthy Children* curriculum materials are available at RipkenFoundation.org/Resource-Portal.

Resources

In addition to [RipkenFoundation.org](https://www.ripkenfoundation.org), here are some related resources that might be helpful in your work with youth:

coachforamerica.com
playworks.org/games
rachelschallenge.org

ripkenquickball.com
searesearch.org
whytry.org

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WRAP UP

National Health Education Standards

The *Badges for Baseball* curriculum will help students accomplish the following National Health Education Standards:

Lessons 1-3 (Sportsmanship, Teamwork, Leadership)

Standard 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

- Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.
- Demonstrate healthy ways to express needs, wants, and feelings.
- Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.
- Demonstrate how to ask for assistance to enhance personal health.
- Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.

Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Lessons 4-6 (Communication, Respect, Resilience)

Standard 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

- Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.
- Demonstrate healthy ways to express needs, wants, and feelings.
- Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.
- Demonstrate how to ask for assistance to enhance personal health.
- Demonstrate how to ask for and offer assistance to enhance the health of self and others.

Lessons 7-9 (Personal Responsibility, Work Ethic, Developing Good Life Habits)

Standard 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

Standard 6: Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

Lessons 10-12 (Choosing to Be Healthy, Choosing Your Teammates, Choosing Your Future)

Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

Standard 2: Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Standard 6: Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

WRAP UP

CONNECT WITH US

You are on the front lines, empowering kids in your community each and every day. You're there through life's challenges, just as Cal Ripken, Sr. was for his kids and his players: teaching them how to make the best of every situation, leading by example, and encouraging them to reach their full potential in life.

At the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, we see our role as supporting you in this shared mission.

Visit our website RipkenFoundation.org to learn more.

Visit our Resource Portal Section for more free activity resources.

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**The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation helps build character
and teach critical life lessons to disadvantaged
young people living in America's most distressed
communities through sports-themed programs.**

