

BASKETBALL PRACTICE HUDDLES

Plan to take 5-10 minutes before or after practice to circle up your team and talk about leadership principles. This should be done off the court so as not to interfere with another team's practice time.

Practice	Leadership Word	Leadership Challenge
Practice 1	Leadership	Locking In, Respecting Others
Practice 2	Energy	Using our voices and hands to raise the energy level. Using high fives to be an energy-giver.
Practice 3	Hustle	Standing out for your hustle.
Practice 4	Effort	The way you do one thing, is the way you do everything.
Practice 5	Teamwork	Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.
Practice 6	Growth	You are what you tell yourself. Choose a growth mindset.
Practice 7	P.A.C.E.	Positive Attitude Changes Everything. Have a positive mistake response.
Practice 8	Attitude	Have a BIG DOG attitude.
Practice 9	Sportsmanship	Treat others the way you would want to be treated.

PRACTICE 1

LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: Locking in, Respecting Others

Coach: Hey! I'm so excited we get to be on a team together this year! What are you most looking forward to this season?

Raise your hand if you've ever played the game Follow the Leader. Who can remind me how to play?

Let's try! I'll be the leader and you follow. [Raise both hands in the air. Wait for players to copy. Make a crazy face. Wait for players to copy.]

What just happened? We had one person leading, and the rest following, right? If you're not leading, what are you doing? Following!

This season we are going to learn more about the game of basketball, but we are also going to learn about being a leader. Why are we going to do that? Because the best basketball players are leaders.

What is a leader? A leader is someone who influences and inspires others to achieve a common goal.

Even if you are brand new to the game of basketball, can you be a great leader on the bench and on the court? Can you be a great leader in life? The answer is YES!

How do you think you do that?

Here is our first challenge for being a leader. We are going to learn how to LOCK IN. When your coach is talking, we want to show respect and leadership by LOCKING IN. This means we:

- Stand up straight with our feet glued to the ground.
- Hold the ball or our hands in place.
- Have eyes right on whoever is speaking.
- Close our mouths.
- Nod your head to show you understand.

Let's practice! When I say "LOCK IN" I want you to repeat "LOCK IN", clap twice, and then do it! Good job! I'm excited to continue working on this in our next practice!

Encouraging Verse: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves." ~ Philippians 2:3

PRACTICE 2

ENERGY

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: Using our voices and hands to raise the energy level. Using high fives to be an energy-giver.

Coach: Last practice we played a little game. In that game you were either a _____ or a _____. (leader or a follower)

Who can tell me what it means to be a leader? (A leader is someone who influences and inspires others to achieve a common goal.)

In the game of basketball, what is our goal? What are we trying to do? (We are trying to win a championship. We are trying to become better basketball players.)

Recognize Saturday's LEADERSHIP recipient. Reiterate the leadership qualities you saw in this recipient.

The first area we need to focus on as leaders is having **SPIRIT/ENERGY**. One of the most successful college coaches, Coach K from Duke, said "A quiet gym is a losing gym."

As leaders, we want to bring champion-level energy to everything we do. We want to be energy-GIVERS instead of energy-TAKERS.

Have you ever had a teammate who was an energy-taker? Give examples of their behavior. (Possible answers: only think about themselves, mope when things don't go their way, quit, have poor body language, refuse to give high fives, etc.) Would this help a team or harm a team?

How do we bring champion-level energy and be an energy-GIVER? Let's start with using our leadership voices. If a leader inspires confidence, we have to learn to speak with confidence.

Let's practice! I am going to ask you a question. I want you to answer with a leadership voice. That means in a voice where everyone can hear you and with good eye contact. Ask: What is your favorite movie? (Help players answer in a leadership voice with eye contact.)

Good job! Now let's practice raising the energy level with our voices. Last practice we learned how to LOCK IN and show respect to your coach when they are speaking. When I ask you to LOCK IN, I want you to repeat it and two-clap with energy. Let's practice!

Raise your hand if you have heard of Steve Nash? He is a former NBA Hall of Fame player who won two MVP's, had 8 all star appearances, and was the assist leader for 5 seasons. During the 2009-2010 NBA season, the Phoenix Suns had an intern count the number of high fives Nash gave to his teammates during a game. 239. IN ONE GAME. Was Steve Nash an energy-taker or an energy-giver?

When a group of researchers studied NBA teams and the number of high fives (other positive touches), what do you think they found out about the teams and players who did not high five each other?

You're right! They did not play well together as a team and did not have much success (or fun I bet)!

What can we learn from Steve Nash and the NBA? What is the challenge for us as a team? (See how many high fives we can give during practices and games! Be energy-givers instead of energy-takers.)

Remember, a quiet gym is a _____ (*losing*) gym! Let's try again!

Let's remember to practice using our voices and hands to raise the energy level next week!

<https://www.basketballpsychology.com/post/high-five-an-mvp-move>

Encouraging Verse: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up..." ~ I Thessalonians 5:11

PRACTICE 3

HUSTLE

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: Standing out for your hustle.

Coach: Last week we talked about being an energy-giver vs. an energy-taker. What are some ways you can be an energy-giver as a leader? (Use your leadership voice, give high fives, cheer for your teammates, etc.)

Recognize Saturday's ENERGY recipient. Reiterate the leadership qualities you saw in this recipient.

Leaders have SPIRIT and help raise the energy level around them. Today we're going to talk about another important word for leaders: HUSTLE.

Raise your hand if you know what the fastest land animal is? Allow players to guess.

If you guessed cheetah, you are right. In the wild, cheetahs can reach speeds of over 70 miles per hour! Can you imagine trying to get away from a hungry cheetah? The fastest human, sprinter Usain Bolt, briefly reached a speed of 27 ½ miles per hour. That's a big difference!

Have you ever seen a cheetah in the zoo? Is the cheetah able to move that fast in his cage or pen? Why? (He has no reason to...his food is brought to him.)

Do you think a basketball coach would rather coach a player who was like a wild cheetah or a player who was like a zoo cheetah?

You're right! Be a wild animal when you play. Let's imagine a wild cheetah who is hungry and has that kind of speed. What can you picture? What might that look like as a basketball player? (Sprinting down the court, diving for loose balls, going after rebounds, down in a stance on defense, etc.)

Leaders stand out for their hustle.

Hustle should be an all-the-time thing.

What are some ways we can stand out for our hustle in practice and in games?

Encouraging Verse: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..."
Colossians 3:23

PRACTICE 4

EFFORT

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: The way you do one thing, is the way you do everything.

Coach: Last week we introduced a new leadership word: HUSTLE. We talked about standing out for your _____. (hustle)

Recognize Saturday's HUSTLE recipient. Reiterate the leadership qualities you saw in this recipient.

What are some ways you can stand out for your hustle? (Sprinting down the court, diving for loose balls, going after rebounds, down in a stance on defense, etc.)

Is hustle a sometime thing or an all-the-time thing? (Hustle has to be an all-the-time thing.)

How might your teammates feel if sometimes you hustle and play hard and other times you don't?

Would they be able to count on you?

How might your coach or teammates feel if you show great effort in games but not in practice?

How might your parents feel if you show great effort when you get to play a sport or video game, but not in your schoolwork or chores?

A leader understands that THE WAY YOU DO ONE THING IS THE WAY YOU DO EVERYTHING.

Your EFFORT is a habit that you must work at. If you want to be a great leader, you must practice putting your best effort in everything you do.

Writing? Your name or a paper? Did you do your best?

A musical instrument? Did you give it your best effort?

Cleaning your room? Did you do your best?

Reading? Did you skim or read the whole thing?

Practicing your sport?

Telling the truth? The whole truth?

Treating others well? Your friends? Your siblings?

Brainstorm some examples of how you can apply THE WAY YOU DO ONE THING IS THE WAY YOU DO EVERYTHING.

Encouraging Verse: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” Colossians 3:23

PRACTICE 5

TEAMWORK

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: Lead your Teammates. A great player can *win* any game. A great TEAM can win *every* game.

Coach: Last week we talked about EFFORT. Effort is a habit you have to work hard at, it takes time and practice. Today we are going to talk about TEAMWORK.

Recognize Saturday's EFFORT recipient. Reiterate the leadership qualities you saw in this recipient.

Can you give me some examples of when teamwork is necessary? (School projects, chores, sports, etc)

One major example of teamwork in human history was NASA's landing on the moon in 1969. How many people do you think were working on this project? (400,000 engineers, technicians, scientists)

WHY? (Because they shared a common goal, they worked together to land on the moon and not ONE person could do this alone.)

Here are some examples of what Teamwork looks like:

1. Be Encouraging. (After each period, high five the players that were on the court.)
2. Giving max effort. (Try your best, not just for yourself but for your TEAM.)
3. Be positive. (Like in Week 2 - be an energy giver.)
4. Communicate positively with your teammates AND coaches. (Remember a quiet gym is a losing gym.)

Each individual brings their own unique strengths to the TEAM. Depend on each other. Rely on each other. Respect each other. Teamwork takes time, patience, and hard work - but it takes time.

Team Challenge: *Each week sit down and talk about ways to improve as a TEAM. LISTEN, and learn from each other.*

Coach Phil Jackson from the Chicago Bulls and LA Lakers said: The strength of the *TEAM* is each individual member. The strength of each member is the *TEAM!*

Encouraging verse: "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Proverbs 27:17

PRACTICE 6

GROWTH

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: You are what you tell yourself. Choose a growth mindset.

Coach: This season we have talked about being a leader through our HUSTLE, EFFORT and through our TEAMWORK. Today we start talking about GROWTH.

Recognize Saturday's TEAMWORK recipient. Reiterate the leadership qualities you saw in this recipient.

Your attitude is how you view something. One of the most important attitudes you will ever have is about YOURSELF.

There are TWO attitudes or mindsets you can have:

1. A "CAN DO" or Growth Mindset

- This attitude often sees challenges as an opportunity to learn and grow. You will hear them say:
 - "I can learn how to do this!"
 - "This is hard, but I will try."
 - "I may not be able to do it *yet*."

2. A "CAN'T DO" or Fixed Mindset

- This attitude believes that you cannot learn new things. You are born with what you have and they will not change. You will hear them say:
 - "I can't do it."
 - "I'm just not good at this."
 - "This is too hard."

Think about what you tell yourself most often. Which attitude or mindset lives within your brain right now? Which attitude would you like to have?

How do you think we can go about changing our attitude towards ourselves? (Answers will vary)

You are right! YOU WILL BECOME WHAT YOU TELL YOURSELF!

We have to take captive those negative thoughts and replace them with a CAN DO attitude.

When a negative thought enters our head, we need to replace it with a positive, CAN DO thought from above.

Let's practice! How would you respond to yourself if your brain says the following:

"I can't do it" TO "I AM GETTING BETTER AT THIS."

"This is too hard" TO "THIS IS HARD BUT I CAN DO HARD THINGS!"

Here is a challenge for you. Write down "I am" statements and hang them somewhere you will see them every day. Say them to yourself at least once every single day! (Use 3x5 cards provided)

Examples:

- "I am strong."
- "I am loved."
- "I am thankful for _____."
- "I am able to learn new things."
- "I am a hard-worker."
- "I am an energy-giver."
- "I can do all things."

What is one "I am" statement you will tell yourself this week?

Professional basketball player Steph Curry wrote his favorite verse, "I can do all things," on his shoes on the first practice of his freshman year and has repeated it to himself daily ever since.

Encouraging Verse: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13

PRACTICE 7

P.A.C.E. (Positive Attitude Changes Everything)

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: Have a positive mistake response.

Coach: Last week we talked about our growth. What are the two attitudes or mindsets that you can have about yourself? (Can-do/growth mindset OR can't do/fixed mindset)

Recognize Saturday's GROWTH recipient. Reiterate the leadership qualities you saw in this recipient.

Has anyone heard this phrase: PRACTICE MAKES _____? (Players should answer with PERFECT.)

Let's talk about that. Have you ever played a perfect basketball game? I know I haven't! Even when I had a great game I still made some mistakes.

Part of having a positive attitude is having a plan for when you make mistakes...because we all will.

Have you ever seen a player who missed a shot or lost the ball and they had a negative mistake response? What did they do? (yelled, made a bad face, blamed their teammate or coach or referee, quit hustling, pouted, looked beaten, stopped trying, etc.)

How did their response affect their game? (they made more mistakes, they got taken out of the game, their team lost the game)

What do you typically do when you make a mistake?

If we want to be a leader, we need to learn what to do with mistakes. It starts with our attitude towards ourselves. If we expect that we will make mistakes because we are trying to learn new things, then we can easily move past them.

Here is a simple positive mistake response:

1. Be a Goldfish! Think about your mistake for 3 seconds or less. Then move on!
2. Tell your body to move on.
3. Focus on the next play.
4. Talk to yourself positively: "You've got this."

Let's practice this together!

Imagine you are in a game and you dribble the ball off of your foot and the other team gets it.

1. Take 3 seconds to think about what you will do differently next time.
2. Move on!
3. What can you do at the next play? (Sprint back on defense.)
4. Say to yourself, "You've got this!"

Using everything we have learned this season, how could you as a leader also help your teammates when they make mistakes? (Speak positively, use a high five, etc.)

Challenge: Let's try to use our mistake response the next time we get on the court!

Encouraging Verse: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13

PRACTICE 8

ATTITUDE

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: Have a BIG DOG attitude.

Coach: We've been talking about our ATTITUDE. What have we learned so far? (Answers will vary.)

Recognize Saturday's P.A.C.E. recipient. Reiterate the leadership qualities you saw in this recipient.

Who here has a dog or dogs in your house? (Or you have friends or family members who have dogs.)

Let's talk about the differences between a big dog and a little dog. Allow players to help you brainstorm.

BIG DOG: Large in size, more intimidating Loud barks Strong/powerful Growls are more intimidating Takes up space Often fearless Can be friendly or fierce	Little Dog: Small in size, typically described as cute Annoying barks May make noise, but not scary Often times bouncy or flighty Fearful, apprehensive
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Can we agree that big dogs are more intimidating than smaller dogs?

Picture this: a big dog has a bone and is enthusiastically gnawing on the bone. Another big dog approaches and decides he wants to take the bone. The dog with the bone gives a warning growl and the dog trying to take the bone lets out a deep bark in response. Which dog ends up with the bone? (Answers may vary.)

Answer: The dog who wants it the most, the one with the fiercer BIG DOG attitude, will end up with the bone.

Mark Twain said, "It's not the size of the dog in the fight but the size of the fight in the dog."

When you step on the court, you want to unleash your fierce, fight-back BIG DOG attitude.

What might that look like on the court? (Brainstorm ideas with players.)

Challenge: Let's bring out our BIG DOG, FIERCE ATTITUDES in practice and games!

Encouraging Verse: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13

PRACTICE 9

SPORTSMANSHIP

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: Treat others the way you would want to be treated.

Coach: Let's review what we've learned about being a leader so far! (Brainstorm with players.)

Recognize Saturday's BIG DOG ATTITUDE recipient. Reiterate the leadership qualities you saw in this recipient.

Today we are talking about SPORTSMANSHIP. What do you think sportsmanship means? Why is it important? (Answers will vary.)

Have you heard of the Golden Rule? Say it with me: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It is called the Golden Rule because it is accepted everywhere as the gold standard or most important rule: treat others the way you would want to be treated.

Many define Sportsmanship as the Golden Rule in sports: treat others the way you would want to be treated.

- Would you want someone to cheat or not play fair?
- Would you want someone to tease or bully you if you lost?
- Would you want someone to make fun of you for making a mistake?
- Would you want someone to argue with you?
- Would you want someone to make faces at you?
- Would you want someone to walk past you and not help you up?
- Would you want someone to not shake your hand?

Be the kind of player who acts the same whether you win or lose.

Let's brainstorm the ways we can do that? (Have players give ideas.)

Let's take it a step further. Is sportsmanship only important on the court? What about in life?

How can we treat others the way you would want to be treated at school? At home? At a friend's house?

Is this always easy?

How can you do the right thing even when everyone else is not doing the right thing? Remember that you have the opportunity to CHOOSE I can either be a leader or a follower.

Challenge: It's TOURNAMENT WEEK! Let's choose to DO RIGHT, even when it's NOT EASY! Be a leader and do the right thing, even if others are not!

Encouraging Verse: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you..." Matthew 7:12