

YMCA Basketball Team Circle Activities for Ages 12 and Up

Key Idea	Description	Page ¹
Four Core Values	Gather the players into a single-file line. “Everyone turn to your right so the person to the side of you is now in front of you. Put your arms on their shoulders. We are going to walk forward, as a group, using first the right foot and then the left. We will walk slowly, so take your time so we all move together. Get ready with your right foot, now step; get ready with your left foot, now step.” Repeat for four steps. “Let go of your teammates. Did we have to work together to walk as a group? We did. All season we will need to work together, with everyone doing their part. We will talk about four values that all players should have—caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. We need to understand and use these values or qualities every practice and game.”	191
Respect	Gather the team into a circle near two cones about 10 feet apart. “What should you do if your opponents are committing fouls, complaining to the officials, and doing things that are not fair?” Listen to their responses. “Stand at this cone if you should continue to play your game and not try to commit fouls. Stand at this cone if you should get back at the other team by playing the same way and complain to the officials.” All players should vote. Ask players why they voted the way they did. Have players at the “complaining” cone think of other options instead of complaining. “You should not change the way you play your game or stop showing respect to your opponents or the officials. It’s important to show respect even if the other team is not.”	194
Respect	Gather the team into a group. “Remember the scenario I talked about in the last practice? The opponent who wasn’t playing fairly? If you play against a team that does those types of things, how should you handle the end of the game? Stand at this cone if you think you should still go to every player and the coach to shake hands. Stand at this cone if you think you should just walk away.” Ask players why they voted as they did. Then separate the team into two groups. Practice an end-of-the-game line-up for both pleasant and fair opponents and for rude opponents. “You should always show your opponents respect by shaking hands at the end of the game, no matter what happens during the game.”	198

¹ This page number refers to pages in the “Plans for 12 and Up” document found on the “Season and Practice Plans” page in the YMCA’s **Coaching Basketball** online course.

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Responsibility	Gather the team into a group. "What should be on your 'mental list' before you come to every practice?" Listen to responses and then lead a discussion about bringing proper equipment (a water bottle, workout clothes); being mentally prepared to work hard and learn new ideas; being well rested; and having eaten well and drunk water during the day. "Each player is responsible for preparing for each practice before practice starts. It's your responsibility to the team to come to practice prepared. Good players are prepared for all practices and games."	202
Honesty	Gather the team into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. Identify three honesty situations that are important for your team to practice. These could be traveling, tripping, or another rule infraction. First, ask players how they would respond, and then discuss how you would prefer them to respond. "Being honest about a play during the game and in practice is an important part of the game. Good players are honest even when an official, coach, or opponent didn't see it happen."	205
Respect	Gather the team into two groups. "Think about professional teams. What ways do they show respect for their opponents?" Discuss with players. Lead discussion to talking about saying positive comments such as "good game" and "nice play today" along with a handshake. "Let's say this is the end of a game. Your two groups are professional teams that played against each other. Show me what you do at the end of the game." Use one of the discussion examples for players to try. "When you say positive comments to your opponents at the end of a game in addition to shaking or slapping hands, it shows you respect your opponents. Good professional players show they respect opponents."	208
Responsibility	Gather the team into two groups. Give one group a ball. Have them dribble and pass to each other. Have one player try to distract the rest of the group. Continue this for one minute. Bring the team together as a group. "How should you respond to someone who is trying to distract you?" Discuss their responses. "If you're at practice and talk to your teammates or distract other players, you're interrupting the practice. It's your responsibility to the team to pay attention at practices and games so you and your teammates can learn and play your best."	211

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Caring	Gather the team and separate them into two groups, each with a ball. "Each group should pass the ball to each other. As you pass the ball I want everybody to be saying something good about the pass and the people passing and catching. I should be hearing constant talk." Encourage excitement about the activity by clapping and providing players with your positive comments. "We will keep the passing going until everyone has had two turns passing and catching. Let me know when you're done." Wait for players to signal that they are finished. "What are some of the positive comments that you heard? Saying positive comments shows you care."	214
Respect	Gather the team into groups of three. Play a one-on-one game with the other player being the official. Play for one minute and rotate players so everyone gets a chance to referee. "How did it feel to be the official?" Discuss responses and importance of showing respect. "It can be difficult to be an official. It involves quite a few skills. Remember that it's a tough job, and always show respect for officials."	217
Caring	Choose two players to demonstrate. Tell them they will role play a situation in which one player is dribbling the ball and passes to the other. The pass goes out of bounds and the player receiving the pass gets upset and yells at his teammate. Have them act out the situation with your assistance. "How would you feel if someone yelled at you for a bad pass?" Listen to their responses. "How about if you made a bad pass, but heard some encouraging words like 'It's okay. Maybe next time'?" Listen to responses, discuss comparisons. "You show you respect your teammates by not yelling at them for a mistake and encouraging them to make a better play the next time they have a chance."	220
Respect	Gather the team into a group near three cones about 10 feet apart. "What are three things you can do or not do that show you respect your body?" Listen to their responses. Main ideas might be not taking drugs, keeping emotional outbursts under control (swearing, pushing an opponent), and not doing dangerous plays in practices and games. As players give responses, have them and others with the same idea stand next to a cone. "Those are all great ideas. When you practice those ideas, you show yourself and others that you respect your body."	223

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Responsibility	Gather the team into a circle. “I want everyone to count how many players we have in the circle.” Wait while they count. “How many do you get, total?” Listen to their responses. “Well, that’s good counting, but you know, the real total is one. That’s right. We’re one team with many contributions from each player. Remember there is no ‘I’ in team. If we don’t play together as one, we will not play our best. To play together we all have individual responsibilities to the team like working hard on defense and offense, following rules, and getting good at ballhandling skills. Making sure each one of you takes that responsibility seriously is an important attitude to practice.”	227
Caring	Gather the team into a group and choose three players to demonstrate. Have the three stand in a line. The two outside players should carefully lift the middle player. Have them problem-solve to find a way to hold the player up. Continue for about 30 seconds and then have them set the player down. “Did you see how Jared was supported by his teammates? Ben and Tyrone showed you how to give physical support, but it’s also important to support your teammates emotionally. What are some examples?” Listen to responses (positive comments, identifying good plays, encouraging comments during losses) and discuss them. “When you support your teammates throughout the season, you show you care about them. You’ll play better as a team when you show you care about each other.”	230
Respect	Gather the team into a group near two cones about 10 feet apart. Choose two players to demonstrate. “Let’s say you just scored a basket. Jack, show everyone a way to celebrate or congratulate your teammates that won’t make the other team upset. Now, Kyle, show the team how you would celebrate if you wanted everyone to know how happy you were and that you thought you played much better than your opponents. If you think the best way to celebrate is like Jack, stand at this cone. If you think Kyle’s is the better way, stand at this cone. . . . It’s important to respect your opponents during games. You can do that by saying ‘good play’ or slapping hands calmly with your team. Now think about respected athletes—what do they do before, during, and after games?” Discuss.	233