
Teaching the Code for Living

Series E: Fables

Lessons designed to illustrate *The Code for Living* through well-known fables



***Winning More
Than The Game***

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE
CONTACT:

Tara Riley
Director of Education
Email: triley@abw.org
P.O. Box 99007
Seattle, WA 98139-0007

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Introduction

These sessions have been designed for use by coaches, parents and athletes for several purposes:

1. To teach the values that stand behind the Code for Living, thereby building the character of the athletes
2. To help team members get to know each other and thereby create stronger bonds to one another and greater commitment to the team
3. To provide coaches with tools for teaching the values the coach holds.

All of the fables used in the following lessons were created by Aesop. Aesop lived nearly 2,500 years ago in Greece where he used his fables to counsel the king and his noblemen on the ways of human nature. Each was created to illustrate a particular aspect of human character. Aesop never wrote down any of his fables. He journeyed from place to place, reciting them in marketplaces and palaces. It was not until years after his death that someone thought to write them down and collect them together. Today you can find Aesop's fables in various children's literature collections.

To gauge whether your team likes an activity or whether the activity is fulfilling the desired objectives, you can carefully watch the players and ask some specific questions. Informal observations over an extended period of time provide some very valuable information. As a successful coach you should be asking yourself:

1. Do the participants understand the fable?
2. Is the challenge appropriate and is everyone involved?
3. Are they having fun?
4. Are they able to make the connection between the fable and themselves? The team?

As the coach, remember that values make our life safe and workable. Understanding values will help students manage their time as well as provide direction in their life. Solid values are the basic stepping stones to happiness and success.

Finally, we believe it is important to provide opportunities for character development in addition to skill development and competition. By participating in exercises such as these, players learn about themselves and one another. This builds individual self-confidence and team unity.

***I will develop my skills to the best of my ability
and give my best effort in practice and competition.***

Lesson 1 ***The Boy and the Nettles***

Age level: any age
Size of group: at least 5

**Learning
Goal**

To understand excellence and how it relates to your team.

Activity

1) Gather the team and share the following fable:

A boy was stung by a nettle. He ran home and told his mother, saying, "Although it hurts me very much, I only touched it gently." "That was just why it stung you," said his mother. "The next time you touch a nettle, grasp it boldly, and it will be soft as silk to your hand, and not in the least hurt you."

2) Discuss the story, focusing on the moral. The moral of this story is "Whatever you do, do with all your might." Excellence is giving your best to any task you do or any relationships you have. When you practice excellence, you are trying to be the best that you can be. How does this relate to your team?

**Coaching
Points**

1) Stress responsibility as "ownership." Players who have ownership in their team take responsibility for being ready to play.

2) Talk about setting realistic short-term goals as it is important that players not only learn how to set goals, but to learn the positive feeling they receive from meeting those goals.

3) Point out the need for not only performance-based goals, but lifestyle goals which lead you through life's journey.

Lesson 2 The Two Frogs

Age level: any age
Size of group: at least 5

**Learning
Goal**

To understand consideration and how it relates to your team.

Activity

1) Gather the team and share the following fable:

Two frogs lived together in a marsh. But one hot summer the marsh dried up, and they left it to look for another place to live for frogs like damp places if they can get them. They came to a deep well and one of them looked down into it, and said to the other, "This looks like a nice cool place. Let us jump in and settle here." But the other, who had a wiser head on his shoulders, replied, "Not so fast, my friend. Supposing this well dried up like the marsh, how should we get out again?"

2) Discuss the story, focusing on the moral. The moral of this story is "Consider the consequences of your actions." Consideration can take on many meanings – related to this fable, it means thinking about how your actions will affect yourself and others. In a broader sense, it is having regard for other people and their feelings, doing things in a way that benefits others, as well as yourself. How does this relate to your team?

**Coaching
Points**

- 1) Try to teach your players that the rules of their sport may actually assist them in becoming better athletes.
- 4) Point out specific rules that relate to sportsmanship.
- 5) Discuss the need for rules to avoid chaos.

I will respect the dignity of every human being, and will not be abusive or dehumanizing of another either as an athlete or as a fan.

Lesson 3 The Eagle and the Fox

Age level: any age
Size of group: at least 5

Learning Goal

To understand respect and how it relates to your team.

Activity

1) Gather the team and share the following fable:

An eagle and a fox formed an intimate friendship and decided to live near each other. The eagle built her nest in the branches of a tall tree, while the fox crept into the underwood and there produced her young. Not long after they had agreed upon this plan, the eagle, being in want of provision for her young ones, swooped down while the fox was out, seized upon one of the little cubs, and feasted herself and her brood. The fox on her return, discovered what had happened, but was less grieved for the death of her young than for her inability to avenge them. A just retribution, however, quickly fell upon the eagle. While hovering near an altar, on which some villagers were sacrificing a goat, she suddenly seized a piece of the flesh and carried it along with a burning cinder, to her nest. A strong breeze soon fanned the spark into a flame, and the eaglets, as yet unfledged and helpless, were roasted in their nest and dropped down dead at the bottom of the tree. There, in sight of the eagle, the fox gobbled them up.

2) Discuss the story, focusing on the moral. The moral of this story is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It's about respect – of honoring people and caring about their rights. Being respectful makes people feel valued. How does this relate to your team?

Coaching Points

- 1) Discuss how respect for opposing players will better prepare you for a game.
- 2) Detail the importance of good sportsmanship and how that relates to a player's development as an athlete. For example, two players of equal ability are vying for a college scholarship – what could make a coach choose one player over the other?
- 3) What's the difference between "Do to others as you would have them do to you," and "Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you?"

I will place team goals ahead of personal goals.

Lesson 4 The Bundle of Sticks

Age level: any age
Size of group: at least 5

**Learning
Goal**

To understand unity and how it relates to your team.

Activity

1) Gather the team and share the following fable:

Once there was an elderly farmer with many sons, who were always fighting and quarreling among themselves. He reasoned with them; he reproached them. But still they quarreled. One day he called his sons together. Before him lay a bundle of sticks tied together. He commanded each son to take up the bundle of sticks and break it in two. Each son tried and each one failed. Then the father untied the bundle and gave them the sticks to break one by one. They did this with ease.

"My sons," said the father, "by this example you can see that there is strength in being together. But once you quarrel and are separated, you are easily destroyed."

2) Discuss the story, focusing on the moral. The moral of this story is "In unity there is strength." The word unity implies the oneness, as in spirit, aims, interests feelings, etc. of that which is made-up of diverse elements or individuals. When people stand alone or with just part of the total group, they have only a small part of the strength that is possible when they stand together. How does this relate to your team?

**Coaching
Points**

1) It is possible to achieve personal goals while totally dedicating yourself to the team goals.

2) A real athlete never has a hidden agenda.

I will be a positive influence on the relationships on the team.

Lesson 5 The Tortoise and the Hare

Age level: any age
Size of group: at least 5

Learning Goal

To understand confidence and how it relates to your team.

Activity

1) Gather the team and share the following fable:

A hare was very proud of his fleetness of foot and enjoyed teasing a tortoise for being so slow and plodding. One day the tortoise could not abide the teasing any longer and he challenged the hare to a foot race. How ridiculous, thought the hare. But he agreed on a time and a place.

So the hare started off at a run, while the tortoise began in his slow, creeping crawl. In no time at all, the hare was so far ahead of the tortoise that he thought he may as well stop to rest. He had a snack. He had a drink. Then the hare lay down, close his eyes, and fell asleep in the shade. The tortoise never slackened his pace. He passed the sleeping hare and plodded along, slow but sure, until he crossed the finish line and won the race.

2) Discuss the story, focusing on the moral. The moral of this story is “Steady effort gains more than talent that isn’t used.” Discuss self-confidence – trusting yourself and knowing your own strengths and weaknesses. When you are confident, you act with strength and you don’t allow fear or doubt to keep you from doing what you really want to do. How does this relate to your team?

Coaching Points

1) A player who is a positive influence on his/her teammates earns respect.

2) When discussing this lesson, think of and give details of teams who went from a losing season to a winning season next time.

I will follow the team rules established by the coach.

Lesson 6 The Frogs

Age level: any age
Size of group: at least 5

**Learning
Goal**

To understand order and how it relates to your team.

Activity

1) Gather the team and share the following fable:

The Frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy swamp that just suited them; they went splashing about caring for nobody and nobody troubling with them. But some of them thought that this was not right, that they should have a king and a proper constitution, so they determined to send up a petition to the Gods to give them what they wanted. "Mighty Gods," they cried, "send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order." The Gods laughed at their croaking, and threw down into the swamp a huge Log, which came down and splashed into the swamp. The Frogs were frightened out of their lives by the commotion made in their midst, and all rushed to the bank to look at the horrible monster; but after a time, seeing that it did not move, one or two of the boldest of them ventured out towards the Log, and even dared to touch it; still it did not move. Then the greatest hero of the Frogs jumped upon the Log and commenced dancing up and down upon it, thereupon all the Frogs came and did the same; and for some time the Frogs went about their business every day without taking the slightest notice of their new King Log lying in their midst. But this did not suit them, so they sent another petition to the Gods, and said to him, "We want a real king; one that will really rule over us." Now this made the Gods angry, so he sent among them a big Stork that soon set to work gobbling them all up.

2) Discuss the story, focusing on the moral. The moral of this story is "Better no rule than cruel rule." The frogs wanted some order in their lives, but they didn't know to what point. Without order, there can be a lot of confusion and unhappiness. How does this relate to your team?

**Coaching
Points**

1) It is important to always help your players understand the rules in order for them to be motivated to follow them out of a sense of responsibility to self and others.

2) It is important for the players to have ownership in team rules. However, each coach will have to, at times, make rules independent of the wishes of the players.

I will display caring and honorable behavior off the field and be a positive influence in my community and world.

Lesson 7 The Young Crab

Age level: any age
Size of group: at least 5

Learning Goal

To understand responsibility and how it relates to your team.

Activity

1) Gather the team and share the following fable:

One day a mother crab took her young daughter for a walk on the beach, wiggling across the sand in the curious way that crabs have. The young crab did likewise. "Child," said the mother crab, "you are not walking properly. You must learn to walk straight forward without twisting from side to side."

"If you walk straight yourself, mother," the young crab replied, "I will try to do the same."

2) Discuss the story, focusing on the moral. The moral of this story is "A good example is the best teacher." Being responsible is to do something well and to the best of your ability; to be accountable for what you do or do not do. It means you will accept credit when you do things right and you will accept correction when things go wrong. How does this relate to your team?

Coaching Points

- 1) A community is created when every member of the team knows each other; cares, respects and affirms each other; and feels membership in and responsibility to the team.
- 2) No matter what level of sport you coach there are always younger players looking up to older players.
- 3) Explain mentoring and how being a mentor can help any player become a positive influence.

***I will give of my time, skills, and money as I am able
for the betterment of my community and world.***

Lesson 8 The Lion and the Mouse

Age level: any age
Size of group: at least 5

Learning Goal

To understand generosity and how it relates to your team.

Activity

1) Gather the team and share the following fable:

Once a great lion lay asleep in the tall grass. Suddenly a mouse happened to scamper across the lion's nose. The lion woke up and roared in anger. He seized the mouse and swung it up to his mouth. The mouse shook with fear. He was sure he would be eaten. "Please Mr. Lion," squeaked the mouse, "if you spare my life now, I promise I will repay your kindness some day." At this the lion smiled. "How could such a tiny thing as this mouse ever be able to help so great and strong an animal as myself?" thought the lion. But since he was no longer angry, the lion let the mouse go free.

Not long afterward the great lion was walking through the thick jungle when he tripped a hunter's trap. A heavy net fell down around him. The lion feared he was trapped for good and let out a thunderous roar. The small mouse heard the lion's angry roar. Remembering his promise, he scurried at once to the place where the lion was caught. "I know you never believed anyone as small as I could be of help to anyone as great as you. But now I will prove that it can be true," said the mouse.

With that, the mouse ran up the rope of the net. With his sharp, small teeth and his sharp, tiny claws, he chewed and tore a hole in the net just big enough for the mighty lion to wriggle through.

2) Discuss the story, focusing on the moral. The moral of this story is "An act of kindness is never wasted." Generosity is giving freely without thought of a reward, recognition or a gift in return. It is seeing an opportunity to share what you have with others and then giving all you can just for the joy of giving. How does this relate to your team?

Coaching Points

1) Compassion is sorrow for the sufferings or trouble of another or others, accompanied by an urge to help.

2) You may want to establish an action plan of community involvement for the entire team or individuals.

Sample Teaching Planner for Series E

Week #	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	10-minutes The Boy and the Nettles	10-minutes The Two Frogs	10-minutes The Eagle and the Fox	10-minutes The Bundle of Sticks	10-minutes The tortoise and the Hare
2	10-minutes Frogs	10-minutes The Young Crab	10-minutes The Lion and the Mouse		

Recognition of Participation

Athletes for a Better World has Certificates of Participation for your athletes available upon request. ABW recognizes the individual efforts athletes and coaches make to live by the Code for Living.