



POWERFUL WORDS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

PARENTS PERCH

Young students: “No matter if we win or lose, we use kind words and follow rules.”

Older students/teens/adults: Showing respect for the rules, the participants & the spirit of competition.

Week 1 Sportsmanship defined: How can I win graciously and lose respectfully?

Week 2 Playing by the rules: Being safe, fair and respectful while in competition.

Week 3 Competitors, coaches & spectators: How should we act, speak and cheer?

Week 4 Dealing with the outcome: What can we learn for next time? What does this mean in the larger picture?

Dear Family,

This month the powerful word of the month is sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is considered “The Golden Rule” of competition. It’s usually associated with one’s attitude while competing in sports. However, good sportsmanship is important in all types of competition. And, while sportsmanship typically describes how participants act when competing themselves, sportsmanship can also refer to those who are spectating.

In fact, research tells us that how the spectators act at an event can have a profound effect on the players. When spectators are positive, the players act more positively. When the spectators act more negatively, so do the players.

We are all responsible for the spirit of competition. However, many of those who coach and manage sports have all but declared that sportsmanship is

dead in 2020. Some observers say that this perspective reflects a larger societal problem, specifically of challenged character and poor moral fiber. One recent study cites the level of competition as the culprit (*Walsh et al, The Sports Journal, May 2020*) while others discuss expectations of aggression or violence and a lack of self-control strategies (*Javier Courel-Ibáñez et al., PLoS One, Feb, 2019*).

At a time when many have been socially distancing for months and there has been tension and frustration in the world, this is the perfect time to reflect upon how we interact, compete, collaborate and work with one another. How can we scaffold our children and bolster their positive character?

Good sportsmanship embodies the written and unwritten rules of a game. When we show good sportsmanship, we follow the known rules like “each competitor must wear the appropriate uniform.” But there are also “unwritten” rules that we must

follow. For example, good sports know that cheating is wrong and that grace when losing and kindness when winning is a respectful part of competition.

As key adults in the lives of children, it’s important to both talk to our children about good sportsmanship and show them what good sportsmanship looks like. This does not mean that we need to pretend we are happy when we lose or “neutral” when we win, but rather show respect no matter what the outcome.

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,
—Your Motivated and Dedicated Instructors

UPCOMING POWERFUL WORDS

AUGUST	COMPASSION
SEPTEMBER	CONFIDENCE
OCTOBER	RESPONSIBILITY