Sports and Social Justice

Resources for Educators and Families

Sports and athletes are captivating to young people and adults alike. We look up to athletes as our heroes, idols and role models. And yet, sometimes sports provide a negative example: a way not to act or behave.

Throughout our nation’s history, athletes have taken stands on issues and made political statements, lent their names to causes they believe in and used their power and platform to speak truth to power. Their words and deeds have influence and impact. As a result, sports inspire teachable moments to talk with young people about identity, diversity, bias and social justice.
Below is our collection of lesson plans and Table Talk family discussion guides that focus on sports and social justice.

Lesson Plans

**Lesson Plan**

**Should Washington's NFL Team Change Their Name?**

**Middle School, High School**

Why is the Washington Redskins' name controversial? Middle and high school students explore and reflect on different perspectives to understand and determine their own points of view.

![Washington Redskins helmet](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

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**Lesson Plan**

**Athletes and Activism**

**High School**

Throughout history, athletes have used their power and influence to stand up for social justice. In this lesson plan, students explore different opinions about the role that professional athletes should play in politics and activism.

![Football player](https://via.placeholder.com/150)
Using professional basketball player Kyle Korver's essay on racism and white privilege, students explore manifestations of privilege and strategize how to use it to engage in ally behavior.
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Teach middle school students about "institutionalized gender discrimination" and the impact of Title IX through the perspective of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team's lawsuit against the U.S Soccer Federation.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Help elementary students understand the language of bias in our lives and ways they can make a difference by exploring letter exchanges between 9-year-old Riley Morrison and NBA player Stephen Curry about the Curry 5's.
LESSON PLAN

Believe in Something: Nike, Kaepernick and Social Change
MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Students learn about Nike's decision to feature N.F.L. player Colin Kaepernick in ad and explore and express what they strongly believe in through creative writing.

Colin Kaepernick, via Twitter

Is Olympic Coverage Sexist?
MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL
This lesson provides an opportunity for middle and high school students to learn more about the 2016 Olympics, reflect on what they’ve seen and heard and assess the extent to which there is sexism and stereotypes in the coverage of the 2016 Olympics.

In 2014 Mo’Ne Davis, a 13-year-old girl, made news headlines as the first girl to ever pitch a shutout in the Little League World series. Explore with elementary students gender stereotypes about sports and in other areas of their lives.
In this lesson, students will have an opportunity to learn more about Donald Sterling's statements, discuss what they would do in certain stakeholder roles and explore the different responses so far.

LESSON PLAN

**Responses to Bias: Donald Sterling of the L.A. Clippers**

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

In this lesson, students will have an opportunity to learn more about Donald Sterling’s statements, discuss what they would do in certain stakeholder roles and explore the different responses so far.

LESSON PLAN

**The Sound of Silence in Football: Derrick Coleman**
MIDDLE SCHOOL

In this lesson, students will discuss this inspiring football player, learn more about Derrick Coleman's life and reflect on a story written by a deaf teenager.

LESSON PLAN

Bias, Bullying and Bad Behavior in the NFL

HIGH SCHOOL

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to reflect on the news story about two Miami Dolphins football players in a situation involving bullying and bias, and which resulted in one player leaving the team and the other player's suspension.
Table Talk Family Discussion Guides

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Sports, Mascots and Bias

The Washington D.C's football team's name continues to spark controversy. Here are tips and strategies for family conversations with young people about mascots, sports team names, slurs and epithets.

Kyle Korver, Privilege and Racism
Kyle Korver, a basketball player with the Utah Jazz, writes an essay about racism and white privilege. Discuss the essay with your youth using our Table Talk parent/family discussion guide.

Tools and Strategies

Women's Soccer Team Takes a Stand

Women in sports face a wide range of inequalities. Talk with your family about the lawsuit the U.S. women’s soccer team filed against the federation that governs soccer in the U.S., which cites “institutionalized gender discrimination.”
Colin Kaepernick, former N.F.L. quarterback with the San Francisco 49ers, took a stand about racial injustice. This Table Talk provides a discussion guide about the Nike ad featuring Kaepernick and the campaign's slogan “Believe in something.”

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Nike’s Ad and Believing in Something**

Colin Kaepernick, former N.F.L. quarterback with the San Francisco 49ers, took a stand about racial injustice. This Table Talk provides a discussion guide about the Nike ad featuring Kaepernick and the campaign's slogan “Believe in something.”

![Colin Kaepernick](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Colin Kaepernick, via Twitter