

# FCA TOOLBOX LEADERS GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

We are honored that you have chosen to join us on this journey of building men and women of character. This guide has been designed to aid you in unpacking this project with your potential donors and teams. The goal of this guide is to share with you a few of the topics, visual aids, and experiences that were used and gained in our time with the donors, teams, and coaches. All of which are not reflected in the summary cards and Presentation Packet provided.

## SHARING THE VISION

To review this project's original vision, see the full story at the website homepage. The two-page Presentation Packet provided is all we used in addition to verbally sharing the vision (face to face) with potential donors. We found the Presentation Packet to be very quick, humble, and powerful. We wanted to sit down with the donor and show them a sample of the items we would be purchasing, but in the end found it was not necessary. Any potential donor or ministry partner you approach about this project should be well aware of what a toolbox is.

## DONOR PARTICIPATION

Once shared, we found that the vision of this project sparked much grander things than we had imagined. Our donor participation journey started with two key donors that enabled/launched us to full speed ahead! These underwriters gave us the green light to start the project even though full funding for every tool had not yet been secured. With the seed/launch money, just short of half of our total funding goal, we were able to purchase the first few items, including our most expensive tool, the toolbox itself. After this, most everyone we approached seemed interested in playing a part. For example, one said, "I would like to purchase the compasses" or even multiple tools "I will cover the hammers and the duct tape." A local bank donated a gizmo tape measure (promotion piece) with their logo on it. Most wished to remain anonymous.

One key participant that we highly recommend is the partnership of a local hardware store. We identified a family-owned store that partnered with us in the way of donating tools and just as importantly selling us tools at their cost. In the case of most tools, not all, we knew where we would purchase. This was helpful in terms of the logistics of working with as few vendors as possible.

Donors who caught the vision also proposed key additions. Our local hardware store contact asked, "You will have a Bible verse to go with each tool, right? For a marginal fee I can have my supplier monogram or inscribe text on the tool." Therefore, we had Matthew 25:40 monogrammed on the nail apron and 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 inscribed onto the screwdriver. Doing this all but ensures that the physical tool will be a reminder of the spiritual truth that was taught in the lesson!

Lastly, we did come across one donor who was willing and flexible enough in their schedule to join our presentation team! Now that is donor participation when you write the check and lead the talk!

## QUALITY VS COST

Overall we didn't find much wrong with entry level or cheaper tools. In regards to how much you would like to spend per tool, it is totally up to you. Here are a few things we learned.

Quality Bibles could be the most expensive item you choose to give. The size of the Bible is also a consideration. We chose to give "pocket sized" Bibles to help with the cost and also allow the players to keep their Bible in their toolbox. We asked our players to keep their toolbox and tools in their locker until the end of the project, except for the Bible. We encouraged them to take those home if they did not have one in use. The largest factor for the Bibles we selected was that we already had some on hand, given as previous donations.

The only item we would change from our experience would be the compass. We purchased the least expensive compass we could find. It was a "mini" compass and it had a carabineer clip. It did what we needed it to do, it was a visual aid...but most were inaccurate in terms of direction. In hindsight, we would make sure they were high enough quality to be used for their intended purpose.

## POINTS OF PURCHASE

For reference this is a list of where we found and purchased each item. Toolbox (local warehouse), Bible (donations on hand), hammer (local hardware), duct tape (local hardware), level (local hardware), hourglass (plaksmacker.com), picture frame (dollar store), screw driver (local hardware), compass (sporting goods), needle nose pliers (local hardware), tape measure (bank promotional piece), and nail apron (local hardware).

## LOGISTICS AND STORAGE

In our initial year our team purchased 355 units of every tool. Our team had 4 presenters, across 3 school campuses and 6 teams. Many will be doing this project with only one team, therefore these issues may not pertain to you. The only "issue" we had was delivering the toolboxes. Those by far were the largest item, 150 tool boxes takes up a good bit of car space. We had to do a bit of planning to deliver the toolboxes to the schools. All the other items were very manageable in regards to their storage and delivery, usually fitting in less than 3 boxes. In a larger application, locating a humble "staging" area to temporally store the items in one place we found to be very helpful.

## THE ORDER

We do highly recommend the order of the first 5 and last 1 item. Obviously, the project hinges around the toolbox itself. From a practical nature it needs to go first as it provides a way to contain all the other items. The first 5 build upon each other and cover what we feel are the most critical of the lessons. This order helps to ensure that these messages do not get "lost" in the routine of the project towards the end. To repeat we recommend this order be the toolbox, Bible, hammer, duct tape, and level. Past these, the order of the other lessons is very interchangeable. There was one instance that we deviated from our intended order due to the delayed arrival of a tool.

The final lesson we recommend being the nail apron. One reason was we found this lesson of service to be a good tie-in to any playoff appearance for your team. Also, the nail apron lesson is a little different than the other lessons. It was designed to be easier to remember, therefore, we hoped it would end the project well.

## SUMMARY CARD PRINTING RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that when printing the cards for hand out that you at least use a card stock. Printer or regular paper will not be durable for any length of time. If you are able to laminate the cards that will make them more durable as well. The PDF print outs are designed to be cut into four quarters in order to help with size and printing cost. Two additional best practices are: 1) Print the toolbox logo on the opposite side of the summary card, see the Logo Sheet provided. 2) Hole punch the upper left corner of each card. We passed out a key chain link as well so that all the summary cards would stay ordered and in one place, not randomly thrown in the bottom of their toolbox. This helps to ensure that the cards are not lost...or annoying.

The following is what we covered during the presentation time of the Bible Study. These ideas are not reflected on the summary cards available for print. Those cards are only meant to be a summary of the lesson covered. Included here might be an introduction, additional story, or in most cases a visual illustration that we found to be very powerful. We recommend that you consider these comments, as well as, review and study the provided summary cards to formulate each of your talks.

### **The Toolbox (the lesson of the Heart)**

We asked the question, "what's in your life?" and the bigger question, "what are you putting in your life?" So much of their lives are determined for them and is out of their control (family, color, socioeconomic status, forms of abuse). But, there is also much that they choose for themselves (friends, drug use, sex, music, relationships, teams). Two sayings we chose to mention were "show me your friends and I will show you your future" and "garbage in, garbage out." I chose to give the example of dog poop. You would never put dog poop in your toolbox. But, many of them are choosing to put foul music and toxic relationships into their life. The story of R.A. Dickey was a good fit. The article in the FCA magazine that we used to tell his story is available for you to read on this website in the summary card section.

### **The Bible (the lesson of Guidance)**

A few Bible facts: there are 66 books, written over 1,500 years, by 40 different people, across 3 continents, and in 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). We used a classic visual aid of doing this lesson in the dark with a flash light. Our first locker room was perfect, it was nearly pitch dark with the lights turned off. This visual aid does a wonderful job to highlight that the Bible is a light to our feet and a lamp to our path. It is our guide through life. Without it we would be lost.

### **The Hammer (the lesson of the Gospel)**

The card does a great job as a guide to share the gospel message. You may also share a method that you are more comfortable with. One statement of note that was made which is not reflected on the card is that, "It was the hammer that drove the nails into the hands and feet of Christ on the cross. Every time you use this hammer, think of what Christ has done for you."

### **The Duct Tape (the lesson of Love)**

This added visual aid went much better than expected. I brought an old rusty leaf rake that I took from my mother's house during the time, many years ago, when she was downsizing her home. I had little attachment to the rake. I told the story about how it was my Father's rake, how my Dad had since passed away, and how sentimental the rake was to me. All of which were true, but, admittedly I stretched the drama. After telling the story I braced the rake on the floor and had my friend kick it, snapping it in two! The kids squealed in shock and disbelief. I held the rake while my friend mended the broken handle with the duct tape. Giving

the visual aid how love covers a multitude of sins. Afterward, a coach pulled me aside and said, "I can't believe he broke your Dad's rake!" Then I knew I had sold the story well. By the way, I kept the rake, which is still in working order. It is more sentimental to me now more than it ever was!

### **The Level (the lesson of Balance)**

Each area of balance (physical, mental, relational, and spiritual) could come with its own sermonette. Under the heading of relational we were sure to pinpoint the issue that many young people think that they don't matter and are labeled "worthless." Many of the homes of our young people today are totally unsupportive at best and abusive at worst. Every person needs to know and work to understand that they are of the utmost value to the LORD.

### **The Hourglass (the lesson of Time)**

It is outlined on the card but need not be over looked or skipped. The students will receive a powerful illustration of how time passes as they watch, in total silence, the sand fall through the hourglass. Use it. Ask the question "what did you learn?" Their responses I am sure you will find fascinating and insightful!

### **The Picture Frame (the lesson of your Future)**

Deep in this lesson is the challenge to get our young people to see past the limits that many place on themselves. Many of these kids come from nothing and they have no vision for a life that is better than the life they see. They feel trapped and hopeless. I love to use opportunities like this to speak life into the next generation. They don't have to settle for nothing because their parents have nothing. They don't have to be a deadbeat dad because their father was a deadbeat. I often speak over young people that "they will be a better father than their father was to them." Stoke the fire of their vision for something bigger!

### **The Screwdriver (the lesson of Sex)**

Yes, the "screw" in screwdriver is a reference to sex. Most will be presenting to teenage kids, you ain't gonna get through this one without some giggles! Know it's coming and roll with it...not against it. Know the room will likely "blow up" on this topic. So go ahead and blow the room up yourself (controlled detonation) and get it over with so it doesn't happen when you least expect it. Share your own sex story or lack thereof or tell a joke, find your way to break the ice.

The story on the card speaks of a great visual aid. If you have a fishing lure with a wicked looking hook or a huge lure, bring it. I also love to work in the visual story of a fireplace in regards to sex. A fireplace is made of brick, mortar, and steel. Its purpose is to contain fire. Within those boundaries a fire can bring warmth, light, and utility. If a fire is outside those boundaries i.e. in your living room...it can quickly burn your whole house down! Same with sex. Inside God's boundaries of marriage between a man and a woman sex is a wonderful thing. But, outside of those boundaries sex can easily become perverted and in all honesty it can destroy one's whole life.

I love to be very candid on this issue. Most adults ain't no dummy! Kids are going to continue to dabble into and explore sexual things, it is part of being human. The point of this lesson is simple, "Look kid, pornography and pre-marital sex is a pit! Beware!"

### **The Compass (the lesson of Morality & Truth)**

This visual illustration game went better than we anticipated. We had a blindfold ready and asked for a volunteer. Once selected, the volunteer was asked to choose someone they trusted. These two had a goal, to get to locker 108 in the back. We then got 6 more volunteers. These would act as distractors. All was permitted in their distracting tactics, except physically restraining, punching, kicking and the like, the blind folded. Everyone else in the locker room were to be witnesses. We spun the blind folded a few times and what followed was AMAZING! Of course there was a lot of yelling, whooping, and hollering but in our example, after yelling proved to be marginally successful, the 6 distractors began to physically remove the trusted volunteer guide! What a lesson for us all! Without the guide, the blindfolded was totally directionless, forced to listen only to the corrupt voices. That visual aid in itself nearly taught the whole lesson. We just described what happened.

In our culture so many voices are yelling so many different things. Who is right? Who do we trust? Which way is right? Which way is wrong? It's politically incorrect to tell someone what they are doing is "wrong," right?!? So how do we know left from right or right from wrong? Thankfully, God has spoken and He has set a standard that is higher than our cultural standard! The Bible teaches us what that standard is. The compass will point north no matter which direction you are facing. There is absolute truth, what God says and has said is truth.

### **The Needle Nose Pliers (the lesson of Excellence)**

There is a saying, "don't sweat the small stuff." I don't think any coach ever said that! It would be wiser stated to say "don't sweat the things that don't matter." Because if it matters then every detail matters...no matter how small. I added the story of my meeting Coach Clyde Christianson at an FCA Camp. His is not a household name but those that he has coached are. Coach Clyde is the quarterbacks coach for the Indianapolis Colts. Yes, he was Peyton Manning's coach and is Andrew Luck's coach. I went to a clinic of his at that FCA camp prepared to be blown away by his schemes and philosophy. I was disappointed. He wasn't concerned about fancy routes and trick plays. He was all about the meticulous details of basic fundamentals...that's it. Steps, balance, shoulders, follow through, just basic drills again, and again, and again. He only wanted to make sure the small stuff was perfect.

Here is a thought that resonates with every athlete and is one that every athlete understands. When things aren't going well and you lose a game or, worse, several games. Coaches don't get more complicated with what they do in practice. When things aren't going well, you don't get more complicated, you get more simple! You don't put in complicated plays; you practice the basic fundamentals of your sport. You get back to blocking and tackling in football. You get back to dribbling, passing, and shooting in basketball. You get more simple. Sweat the stuff that matters, no matter how small, and when you get those details right. Then, the big stuff will take care of itself.

### The Tape Measure (the lesson of Value)

The verse on the card highlights how we measure a man humanly speaking. Size, strength, appearance, wealth, power, influence, sex, home runs, touchdowns, GPA, and IQ. Minus the last two, all these things would make a pretty good rap video. But, they are myths, these things will never add up to a satisfying life. They are hollow, a mirage, as soon as you attain it...there is always one more step ahead and you never make it to your final destination. Thank goodness, the LORD is not concerned with those things. Man looks at the outward appearance; the LORD looks at the heart. Each person is of the utmost value to the LORD and this value is not based on our performance.

### The Nail Apron (the lesson of Service)

This one is a bit different. The story included on the card is simply a picture. One that gets fascinating responses to this simple question, "what do you see in this picture?" Ask it. Then, allow your kids time to respond. Their mental wheels are turning. Give them the opportunity to speak. You will find that what comes out is usually pure gold! Each answer you will find could be its own sermon. You will get answers like, "the leader is with his team," "the leader is in the front, showing others the way," "the load is heavier with the boss in the back," and "everyone pulling the rope is leading." Our minds process things in pictures. They are easier for us to remember. That is why it is said that, "a picture is worth 1,000 words." This is a picture of servant leadership that hopefully will stay in their minds for years to come!

Jesus Christ is the ultimate servant leader. When our President declares war, he sends others to go and fight on his behalf. The President doesn't go to the front lines of battle. That is what earthly kings do. They stay in the back. But Jesus is the KING of kings. He is the LORD of lords. He came to this earth, differently. He came humbly. He humbled Himself even under death, a horrible death on a Roman cross. He set the example of humility for us to follow! He was friendly toward the outcasts. He washed the disciple's feet. If anyone deserved to be served it is HE! But Christ, the God-man, did not come to this earth to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many! He set the example of how we should strive to live our lives, He was a servant.

## LESSONS LEARNED

The first lesson we learned was after we passed out the hammers at our first school. We purchased 16 oz. oak-handled hammers, this thing was a real man hammer! After we passed them out we thought nothing of it. When one of us came back to use the bathroom he found coach taking all the hammers back up! "Why are you taking the hammers back up?" It was a good question. Coach said, "On school property these could be considered weapons. Better safe than sorry." So, after that experience we informed all the other schools coaches about what had happened. We gave them the option to keep the hammers boxed up and we would pass the hammers out at the conclusion. All the other schools chose to keep the hammers boxed in a coach's office until they were free to take the toolboxes home.

Next, we toyed with the idea of simply getting two cheap screwdrivers (one flat head and one Philip's head) we decided to purchase one upgraded "adjustable" 6 in 1 screwdriver with 2 flat, 2 Philip's, and 2 hexagon. I am so glad we went with the upgrade. It is smaller because it is just one and is so useful.

Last, one change was briefly mentioned before. We would purchase an upgraded compass. As the cheapest we found was of less than useful quality.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The vision for this project caught on quickly in every instance that we shared. Many brought their own immediate thoughts to the table upon hearing. One example was the text inscribed on the tools. Another worth mentioning was an idea that we were not able to execute. This thought was centered around the fathers of the athletes. A visionary question was, "Is there a way, somehow, we could get affirmation from each father to their son or daughter? Could we invite them to attend a ceremony at the end where they might be allowed to publicly speak to their child or could we at least get them to write a letter?" Executing this vision would be much more difficult, but if you could, dare I say that in many families, it would be the MOST impactful gesture that many of these fathers would EVER do in the lives of their children!

An additional thought for you to consider would be for you to identify some partners. Doing this project with a team or a partner will make it so much more enjoyable and manageable.

The last thing that we did on two of three campuses was to come back for one concluding talk. This talk was only guided by us and it was this simple. "We are going to invite five folks to come to the front and share what stuck. You only have a minute and a half, only 90 seconds, to share with us what was the main thing you learned from your toolbox." Across the 2 schools and 10 kids that shared, only one tool was repeated. This acted as confirmation that all the lessons were good and that much of what we had created applied to different kids going through different issues. I can't really describe in text how rewarding it was to see all of our effort, preparation, donor visits, and coordination end in tangible expressions of lessons learned.

Praise the LORD for all he has done and will do through these toolboxes. May the LORD bless you in your efforts to Build Men and Women of Character.