*This lesson can be presented over 1-2 sessions. Instructors should feel free to use whichever discussion questions and activities you think best for your class or group. We advise giving students the sheet with the definitions of the virtues before each session.*

Dwayne Wade – Winning the Game of Life through Love, Family & Generosity

**Leader’s Guide**

**Lesson Goals**

Help students:

* understand and appreciate different aspects of love, and especially through this story love that forgives, perseveres and cares for others
* appreciate the value of good parents in our lives in inspiring us toward goals and dreams, teaching us how to work toward our goals, setting rules and boundaries that help us to become better people and offering us love and care
* realize the joy and fulfillment that can come from being a good parent
* become inspired to be generous & care for others in whatever ways we can, now and in the future
* see how by caring for others we can help them to live with hope and to strive for their dreams
* appreciate that through perseverance and with the support of others we can be resilient

**Primary Virtues / Character Traits**

**Love** – to freely give of ourselves for the betterment of another person, without expecting anything in return, and especially within our families as children and parents  **Forgiveness:** to stop being angry, resentful and desiring vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you; to grant pardon for an offense or debt; to free yourself from anger and another from guilt

**Generosity:** giving freely of our own possessions, time and/or talent  
 **Hope**: confident expectation of achieving a goal or wish  
  
**Perseverance**: trying hard and continuously in spite of obstacles and difficulties   
  
**Resilience**: the ability to recover from, or successfully adjust to change and difficulties

**Secondary Virtues / Character Traits**

**Caring:** to help others; a caring person lives with empathy in trying to understand another person’s situation, compassion in desiring to help others, and generosity in acting to help   
  
**Discipline:** training expected to produce a specific benefit, moral, mental and / or physical improvement

**Humility**: modest opinion of one’s own position; an honest self-appraisal of one’s strengths and weaknesses; a lack of false pride; realizing that we don’t have all of the answers and being open to learning from others

**Leader Introduction**   
(Leader might consider bringing in a basketball to capture the attention of students)   
Who here likes basketball? Who are some of your favorite basketball players? Today, we are going to talk about a legendary basketball player–Dwayne Wade. Does anyone know who Dwayne Wade is? He’s from Chicago, and he won *three* NBA championships while playing for the Miami Heat. But even if you aren’t a basketball fan, Dwayne Wade is still someone you can cheer for off the basketball court too. He has helped many people within his family, community, and even complete strangers. And now we’re going to watch some stories that demonstrate Wade’s admirable character.

**Film Clips** (we advise showing all three videos below)1. GMA Wade interview – his career and life as a whole.

Teachers, start this at 1:27 so as not to glamourize or encourage drinking alcohol.   
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kq-aVyMXwQ>  
  
2. Oprah interview with Wade about his mother   
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCDNk53kz40>  
  
  
3. Oprah interview with Wade about his father   
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KWAtcm-XDU>

**Leader Summary**   
Dwayne Wade became a basketball star with lots of practice, but more importantly, he practices being a good person. Like we saw in the videos, Wade respects and admires his teammates and competitors. He is humble and appreciative of his fans. He speaks highly of other people. He values and loves his family, especially his parents, even though he didn’t always have a good childhood. In all of these ways, Wade is a role model for all of us. Take a few seconds and think about how all of these qualities helped him become the exceptional person he is today.

**Discussion Question Options** *(discussion prompts / answers are bulleted below if needed)*

Before beginning our discussion, let’s read over the virtues and their definitions - included within the online lesson as a separate document.

(Leader might consider passing around the basketball for students to hold when they answer the discussion questions)

1. What did Wade say in the videos about not giving up? Who did he not give up on?

* Wade said, “I never gave up on anything” and “I’d never give up on my kids.” He had to work to get custody of his children and said it was a “grueling” process.
* Wade never gave up on his mother by remaining in her life, hoping for her recovery and then even giving her a church when she became a minister.

2. Let’s focus on Wade’s mom. How difficult or easy do you think it would be to truly forgive a parent who exposed you to that kind of life?   
  
What virtues did Wade have to live out to truly forgive his mother?

* Love in wanting the best for his mother, and especially trying to encourage her recovery
* Empathy in being understanding of her addiction

3. Although Wade never stopped loving his mother and wanting the best for her, his other family members had to step up to give Wade an opportunity to have a more positive and caring family life. Which family members helped him, how did they help him and what virtues did they live out?

* His older sister removed Dwayne from his mother and brought him to live with his dad. This was a heroic act of love in that she was willing to make a very difficult decision to help her brother live in a better environment.
* Wade’s father accepted him into his home and provided him with dreams to strive for as well as the discipline to help Wade achieve his dreams. Wade’s father was likely also motivated by love.

4. Wade said that being a dad to his own sons “is the hardest job that I have, but it’s the most rewarding and fulfilling job that I have… My dad always showed me love and always showed me attention, and I want [my kids] to pass that along to their families as well.”   
  
Does listening to Dwayne Wade talk about what it means to him to be a dad, change our perspective on what being a parent means and its importance?   
  
Does it surprise you that a major NBA star would say being a dad is his “most rewarding and fulfilling job” ?

5. Wade was given an opportunity to succeed in life through the actions and support of his sister and dad, but to succeed he still had to choose to take advantage of his opportunity. What virtues did Wade need to live out to succeed?

* Perseverance and discipline in practicing hard and consistently to improve his skills
* Humility in accepting the rules – the “dos and don’ts” that his father set out that helped him to stay out of trouble and to focus on his goals
* Resilience in not using his early childhood experiences as an excuse but rather being determined to successfully overcome and adjust to these difficulties. Living with perseverance and with support we can become resilient.

6. How has Dwayne Wade lived out the virtue of hope?

* Wade believed in himself and his capability, he didn’t give up on himself.
* Wade was always hopeful his mom could recover from her addition.
* In giving money and opportunity to others he has expressed his hope, his confidence in them that they can achieve a better life.

7. Dwayne Wade’s mother did not give him a good childhood, but he loved and forgave her regardless. He said, “What I saw inside of her was a mother who loves her kids, and was looking and wanted someone to help her.” How can we see and focus on the good side of people and situations?

* Love: by wanting the best for others without expecting anything in return
* Forgiveness: by removing our anger and resentment toward people who have hurt us
* Humility: in knowing we are not perfect ourselves, and that everyone messes up sometimes
* Empathy: in trying to understand another person’s struggles

8. Wade said his mom is his hero. Why does he believe this?

* Wade talked about his mother fighting every day to get better, and how she kept looking and wanting someone to help her and give her a sense of direction.
* Wade talked about his mother eventually overcoming her addiction inspires him to keep going despite setbacks that come in life.

9. Wade said his role model is his dad. Why does Wade look at his dad in this way?

* “He (my dad) gave me dreams that I never had before that.”
* “I needed that male voice, I needed that discipline, I needed someone to be able to look at and say I want to be like you.” So Wade knows his dad not only gave him dreams but also helped him to live with discipline and focus to achieve his dreams.

10. When Dwayne moved in with his dad, his dad kept his siblings and himself out of trouble by being strict and also demanding respect, but also by putting him in sports and inspiring his future dreams. Sometimes when someone–whether that’s a family member, teacher, or someone else– is strict with us it doesn’t seem like love, but they probably are doing it out of love or wanting the best for us. How is being strict a way of showing us love, and actually good for us?

* Possible answers include: they want to teach us how to be good people; they want us to obey the rules so we don’t get into trouble; they want us to focus on working to achieve our dreams; they want us to make good grades to give us opportunities in life; because it would be easier on them to not be strict, but they are taking the time and effort to teach us right from wrong and good behavior.

11. What virtues or qualities do you think a hero and role model should have? Is there someone you would like to mention in your life or someone in the world who has some of these qualities?

* This is also a journal writing option below.

12. Dwayne Wade said “I always go by the creed my coach taught me in college – to whom much is given much is required.” How has Wade lived this out?

* Wade pays for scholarships for students to get through college; he has taken families who have lost all of their belongings in a fire shopping; he has honored his fans who have passed away by writing their names on his basketball gear; he bought his mom a church after she became a minister, and has inspired countless people.

13. What does the statement “to whom much is given much is required” mean for us in our lives now and in the future? Do you think we have to be rich and famous for this statement to apply to us?

* We don’t have to be rich or famous because we can share and help others with whatever we have. Even something as simple as sharing our time with others and saying something that can affirm and support a friend or family member can be powerful.

**Journal Writing Options**

* + - 1. What virtues or qualities do you think a hero and role model should have? Write about a person or persons who have some of these qualities and who you look up to. The people you write about don’t have to be famous. They can be a family member, coach, teacher and even a friend.
      2. After reflecting on the how Dwayne Wade’s parents influenced his life, both positively and negatively, write about the type of parent you may want to become. What are the values you want to pass along to your children and how do you want to interact with your future children?
      3. Dwayne Wade never gave up on his mom and forgave her for not being a good mom for him in his early years. When have you forgiven someone? Was it difficult for you? How did you feel after you forgave them? How did your forgiving them effect your relationship?
      4. Wade is a good example of humility in saying how he is filled with so much love, and so much gratitude, and so much appreciation for the people who have supported him. He doesn’t take all of the credit for his success—he knows he wouldn’t be where he is now without the help of other people. Although we aren’t NBA stars we still have the opportunity to support others and have likely received support from others. Write about who has supported you in your life and how, and how you have helped others?

**Extended Activity:**

1. “Dwayne Wade exchanged Jerseys with all the basketball players he played with and against over the years. This showed his good sportsmanship, as well as his respect and appreciation to be able to compete with other successful people. Design your own Jersey to exchange with the one of the other students. Place onto your jersey the virtues and goals that are important to you. As you exchange your jersey with another person each of you should explain why each of the virtues and goals on your jersey is important to you, and have a conversation about these. Also, share something you respect and admire about the other person.

(Teacher will assign students into groups of two to exchange jerseys. Jersey design template attached below)



