

Core Values in Debate

The NCFCA Core Values are explained on our [NCFCA Mission, Values, and Beliefs page](#), along with supporting scripture; however, each value bears specific application to debate.

Values involve heart issues that cannot be imposed by rules, but together, we can encourage and hold one another accountable for growth in the application of values we want to cultivate.

The following guidance is intended to help competitors, coaches, club leaders, and parents better understand and apply the NCFCA Mission and Core Values in the context of debate. The *Do* and *Don't/Instead* examples offered below are not rules, but they represent principles for worthy behavior. While they don't cover every scenario, they do represent some of the most common issues competitors must respond to and can provide guidance for growth in integrity and grace.

Godly Wisdom

Godly wisdom in debate means rightly applying knowledge, evidence, and support to arguments.

Do research and accept coaching to truly understand complex debate topics.

Don't make bold, confident statements about topics you don't actually understand. **Instead**, be humble about the limits of your own knowledge and understanding.

Do make understandable arguments with evidence and support that fits the context.

Don't make arguments that you know are confusing or unconnected to the topic. **Instead**, seek to clarify information for everyone participating in the round.

Redeeming Truth

Redeeming truth in debate means valuing the truth and worth of your words above winning in any way that involves dishonesty or inappropriate content.

Do choose topics and arguments that are worthy of debate and of your competitors' and judges' time and attention.

Don't bring up disturbing content for the sake of making a dramatic point or manipulating emotions. **Instead**, avoid dwelling on evil, and use caution and sensitivity to deal with topics that others may find troubling.

Do answer questions and make arguments honestly even if the honest answer is "I don't know," or if the truth favors your opponent.

Don't say anything you suspect may not be true or make something up in a round even if you think it might help your side. **Instead**, prefer an honest loss to a cheap, dishonest win.

Gracious Communication

Pursuing gracious communication while arguing with passion requires self-control and a firm resolve to respect others even in areas of intense clash.

Do commit to speaking in a way that honors and blesses all participants.

Don't try to embarrass, surprise, or undermine fellow debaters. **Instead**, be forthcoming with information and explanations, especially to help struggling opponents.

Do treat partners, opponents, and judges with kindness, humility, and respect.

Don't use bored or scornful facial expressions or whisper at length through your opponent's speeches. **Instead**, listen attentively and politely, even after all of your own speeches are finished.

Enduring Excellence

Enduring excellence in debate is characterized by valuing and doing the hard work required for solid preparation and long-term growth.

Do your own research and preparation to understand the resolution and its related topics.

Don't spend time strategizing shortcuts for easier wins or plan to rely primarily on the work of others. **Instead**, study in a way that will help you better understand complex issues in a balanced way throughout life.

Do seek to be challenged by opponents, and be willing to seek feedback and constructive criticism.

Don't assume that you know better than parents, coaches, judges, or peers. **Instead,** be willing to humbly evaluate and accept corrections and challenges to your positions.

Constructive Community

Constructive community is built on authenticity, mutual respect, and transparency—both inside and outside of competition rounds.

Do support those who are struggling and encourage those who lack confidence.

Don't gossip, shun, or participate in attempts to exclude others from fellowship or collaboration. **Instead,** be welcoming and willing to help everyone compete well.

Do value collaboration, openness, and better debate rounds for everyone.

Don't use secrecy as a weapon or strategy. **Instead,** be willing to share enough information to allow all fellow competitors to prepare to compete well against you.
