

# Leadership for All

By Ann Marie Eckert

## Purpose

Sometimes people think that leadership is for a select group of people who have unique gifts, elected offices, and popularity. But the truth is, everyone has the opportunity to lead! This session is designed to help young people think about the skills and attitudes that make other people good leaders and to encourage them to adopt these same skills and attitudes in their own lives.

## Session at a Glance

7:00 p.m. Welcome  
7:05 p.m. Leadership Buzz  
7:25 p.m. The Leadership Challenge  
7:35 p.m. Group Work  
7:45 p.m. Reporting  
7:55 p.m. My Own Leadership  
*Session Extender: How I Am Leading? (add 20 minutes)*  
8:05 p.m. Closing Prayer  
8:15 p.m. Announcements and Refreshments  
8:30 p.m. Good Night!

## Extend the Session: How I Am Leading? (20 minutes)

Engage the young people in a conversation about the ways that they are currently leading and help them do some self-evaluation about how they can do a better job. Use the following questions to get them talking, either as a whole group, or in their small groups (2-3 people) or in their table groups.

- What leadership roles do you currently have?
- What are some other ways that you lead—at home, in school, with friends, by the way you live?
- Looking at **Handout 1, The Leadership Challenge**, which of those five practices seems the hardest for you right now?
- Which is the easiest?
- Assuming that we all want to grow in being better leaders, what are some ways that we could support each other in developing these practices?
- How could the leaders of youth ministry do a better job of leading?

## Materials Needed

- CD player
- Newsprint, two sheets for each group (there are five groups), plus 3 extra
- Markers, five, each a different color
- Masking tape
- Pen or pencil, one per participant
- Basket
- Paper, about 30 sheets
- **Resource 1, The Leadership Challenge**
- **Handout 1, The Leadership Challenge**, one for each participant
- **Handout 2, How Leaders Lead**, five copies total
- **Handout 3, My Own Leadership**, one for each participant
- Prayer supplies: small table covered with a cloth, Bible, candle, matches or lightstick
- White cloth, cut into 3x3" (inch) squares, one for each participant. These should be placed in the basket for the closing prayer after the teams choose their categories.

## Prepare in Advance

1. You will need to set-up five work areas. Each area should have a table (preferably round) and chairs. You will divide the participants into five work groups, so the number of chairs needed will be proportionate to the number of participants divided by five. These tables, if possible, should be set-up near a wall space, separate from each other. The middle of the room can be pre-set with chairs in a circle or concentric circles. The prayer table will go in the center of this circle for the Closing Prayer.

2. Write the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 on slips of paper and place them in the basket.

3. Write the following five categories on a piece of paper:

- ▣ Sports
- ▣ Foreign Countries
- ▣ Religion
- ▣ People I (Personally) Know
- ▣ The United States

4. Invite a team member (youth or adult) to prepare a short (5-10 minute) presentation on **Resource 1, The Leadership Challenge**. The goal is that the team member will provide an overview of the '5 Practices' of good leaders. If possible, have the team member use an example from his or her own life of someone who is a good leader to draw out each of these practices. Invite them to choose someone that the young people are not likely to put on their own lists.

5. In preparation for the closing prayer, have one or two team members (youth or adults) use the time while the small groups are working (from 7:35 p.m. forward) to write petitions related to the people that were listed as the "best leaders" from each category. Try to cluster them together in ways that make sense so that you have no more than 8 petitions. Consider writing them in ways such as:

- ▣ We pray in thanksgiving for the leaders of our recent past—Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, and Gandhi—who taught us what it means to sacrifice for people in need. Give us the courage and strength to stand up for the most vulnerable in our society. We pray to the Lord.
- ▣ We pray for all those who are leaders of sport and entertainment. We pray that God may guide their lives and careers so that they can serve as healthy and holy role-models for young people across the world. We pray to the Lord.

Have two team members prepared to read the petitions during the closing prayer, or invite two young people to prepare for these petitions immediately before the closing prayer.

6. For the closing prayer, have a team member write the name of each of the 25 leaders selected as the "best leaders" (or edit the list, if desired) on an individual sheet of paper, written large. These should be placed around the prayer table on the floor, and perhaps taped to the tablecloth.

7. Invite a young person to proclaim Romans 12:3-8 for the closing prayer.

8. Invite a team member to prepare a very short reflection on John's Gospel of the Washing of the Disciples Feet, John 13: 1-17. The goal of the reflection is to help the young person know that Jesus sent his disciples forth, telling them "as I have done for you, you should also do." As disciples, we should lead and live as Jesus did. The reflection should end with the team member(s) handing out the pieces of white cloth to each participant with the challenge to use the cloth as a reminder that we need to take up the towel and serve others.

9. Choose a closing song for the prayer service. You want a song that everyone can sing easily – without needing the words. Choose a song that is familiar to the young people of your group, or teach them the song ahead of time. Consider the following: “Here I Am, Lord” by Dan Schutte (*Spirit & Song*, OCP); “Here Am I, Lord” by Curtis Stephan (*Spirit & Song 2*, OCP); “Open the Eyes of My Heart” by Paul Baloche (*Choose Christ*, OCP). If your group is not used to singing, you can choose to play a song on CD as you are handing out the “towels.”

10. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with a check-in sheet and nametags. **Hospitality is important:** As the leader, do not use the gathering time before the session begins to take care of last minute preparations. Spend the time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.

## Session Outline

### Welcome (5 minutes)

Greet the participants as they arrive and make sure that people have nametags if everyone doesn't know each other.

Begin with this simple introduction:

Today we are going to spend some time talking about leadership. Before we say anything else about leadership, I want to say this: Everyone is a leader. You may never get elected to an office, or named captain of the team, or serve on a leadership team, but that doesn't mean that you aren't a leader. Leaders are people who live by their values and invite others to care about the things that they care about. By that definition, each of us has the opportunity to lead each and every day. Today we are going to look at some specific ways that people lead—and figure out how we can do the same.

### Leadership Buzz (20 minutes)

Note to Leader: If your group is larger than 50, consider doing two groupings. Divide the participants in 10 groups, and have two separate areas set up for this activity. They can be done in the same room.

Divide the participants into five equal-sized groups. Invite each group to go to one of the tables where you have pre-set two newsprint sheets. If the participants don't know each other, include a short introduction time inviting everyone at the table to introduce themselves, where they go to school, and their favorite ice cream flavor.

Ask each group to select a team captain and a recorder. The recorder should be able to write quickly and the captain must be an honest person. Give them a minute to choose their leaders.

Ask the captains to come forward. Have each of them pick a number (1 to 5) out of a hat. Whomever picks number 3 gets to go first, followed by 5, then 2, then 4, then 1. The captain who picked #3 should choose their team marker color (from five choices) and the category that their team will begin with—Sports, Foreign Countries, Religion, People I (Personally) Know, and the United States. After all the teams have been chosen their color and category, continue with these directions:

Since we are focusing on leadership, we are going to do a quick brainstorm of all the leaders that we know. Here is how we are going to do it. Each group has chosen their category and team color and a recorder. At the top of the newsprint sheet, write category your team has chosen.

Your group's job, in one minute, is to brainstorm as many leaders in this category as you can. Only the recorder can write and you must have the actual name of the person—not “The President of Brazil” or “The Third Baseman.”

However, it must be done in this way: The captain goes first, followed by the person on his/her left, and it continues around the circle. Each person must name someone before the next person can answer—and no one can tell another person what to say. Your team can go around the table as many times as you can, but each person must speak in order. It is the captain's job to make sure that the group doesn't cheat. If they do cheat, the captain's job is to disqualify the team. Are there any questions? (If so, answer them. If not, start the brainstorming. Give them only one minute.)

Ask each group to count up the number of people they have listed and put that number at the top of the page. Then have each group switch to another table (in a specific order, since all teams will go to all the tables). They should bring their team color (marker) with them. Tell the participants that the rules for this round are the same—only one minute to brainstorm, they must go around the table, and they cannot repeat any of the people currently listed on the page. However, if someone fits into more than one category (the soccer coach of your team is someone you know and a sports leader), they can be listed in a new category.

After one minute, ask the teams to count up the number of people listed (from their team) and write it near their additions to the list. Have each team move to a new table. Continue with this until all the teams have been to all the tables.

Return the teams to their original tables and ask them to look over the newsprint sheets and to determine the following:

1. Who do they think are the five best leaders listed?
2. Do they disagree with any of the names listed?

Give them three minutes to look over the whole list. Get a quick report from each of the groups, writing the names of the five best leaders from each group on a new sheet of newsprint. If the groups do have someone they don't think was a leader, let the group that put him/her on the list defend their brainstorm. If necessary, have an adult leader be the judge.

Ask the group the following questions:

- How did you select the people you listed as the best leaders from your list? What criteria did you use? (Consider listing this on a sheet of newsprint.)
- In talking about who shouldn't be on the list, what criteria were you using?

*Note to Leader:* If a group disqualified themselves, ask them about that situation and how they felt about the captain for doing his/her job. If you suspect that a team cheated but didn't disqualify themselves, you might inquire about that with the whole group by asking everyone if any cheating went on during the activity. Then ask them if their captain did what they were supposed to do. Try to get the group to talk about why the cheating was allowed to happen and why the captain didn't disqualify his/her team.

Have each team post their newsprint sheets on the wall near their table in preparation for the next activity. While the groups are doing this, pre-set **Handout 2, How Leaders Lead** (one copy) on each table with a pen.

### **The Leadership Challenge (10 minutes)**

Invite all the participants to gather in a common area, away from the tables. They should be seated in chairs or on the floor and given a copy of **Handout 1, The Leadership Challenge**. Use **Resource 1, The Leadership Challenge**, to give an overview of the '5 Practices' of good leaders.

### **Small Group Work (10 minutes)**

Give the following instructions to the participants:

Each of your groups is going to return to your table. On the table are some worksheets for you to complete. Each group has already selected five “best leaders” from your brainstormed lists, and we would like you to use these people in thinking about the questions listed on the worksheets. Ultimately, we are asking you to think of ways that these “best leaders” live out the ‘5 Practices’ of good leaders that we just talked about. Some things to keep in mind...

- You don’t have to only use the five leaders you selected. If someone else from your list is a great person to highlight for one of the practices, you can use him or her. Please use only people in your category.
- Not everyone will apply to every question. Feel free to answer the questions specific to one person—even if that one person changes with each question.
- There isn’t a wrong way to do this. We simply want you to think about how the leaders in your category live out these practices. Some leaders will be stronger at some of the practices, while others with other practices.

Invite each group to return to their original table. Give the groups about ten minutes to work on **Handout 2**. Go to each of the tables to help them get started, if they seem to be struggling.

### **Reporting (15 minutes)**

Ask each group to give a brief report of their work—highlighting one key thing from each of the five pages.

### **My Own Leadership (10 minutes)**

Invite all the participants to form groups of 2-3 people—preferably from their own work groups. Distribute **Handout 3, My Own Leadership**, and a pen to each person. Give the participants about 2-3 minutes to do some writing and thinking about the questions, then invite them to talk with their partner/group of three about the questions listed.

### **Closing Prayer (10 minutes)**

Place the prayer table and the “best leaders” in the center of the circle. Invite the participants to sit in the chairs that surround the table. Prior to beginning the prayer, invite each person to take a moment of silence.

#### *Gather*

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Let us begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

God of all, you call each of us to use our gifts for the good of others. You call us to leadership. Jesus, Son of God, you showed us what it means to lead without position, without title. Holy Spirit, you are with us today, helping us to discover our own gifts and the places that we are being called to lead. Father, Son, and Spirit, fill our lives with your love and fill our hearts with a desire to serve. Amen.

#### *Listen*

Invite the reader to proclaim Romans 12:3-8. Allow a few moments of quiet.

#### *Respond*

Invite the team members/young people to read the petitions. Invite the participants to respond, **“Lord, hear our prayer,”** or another response of your choosing.

#### *Send Forth*

Invite the team member to give his/her reflection on the Washing of the Disciples’ Feet.

At the end of the reflection, the white cloths should be distributed to each participant while the song you have chosen is sung.

## **Announcements and Refreshments (15 minutes)**

Thank the young people for their participation tonight, make any announcements, and invite them to enjoy some refreshments.

This session was written by Ann Marie Eckert, Coordinator of Youth Ministry Services, Center for Ministry Development, Buffalo, New York.

### **Resource 1**

## **The Leadership Challenge**

James Kouzes and Barry Posner wrote the book, *The Leadership Challenge*. The book contains their findings after interviewing hundreds of leaders in business, non-profits, and other leadership positions. The following is a brief summary of some of the key elements of their findings. Use this information to create a 5-10 minute presentation about good leaders. The young people will have a summary of this information (**Handout 1, The Leadership Challenge**) as a guide. Think of someone from your own life, preferably someone you have known personally, that you can use as an example. If one person doesn't fit for each of these practices, consider using a few people to explain how they lived out these practices in their own life and leadership roles.

Kouzes and Posner found that there were five key practices that good leaders did that made them successful. For each of the practices, there were at least two key things that they did to make that practice real and visible to their followers. The five practices are:

### **1) Model the Way**

- Leaders know what they believe in and they develop a clear sense of their own values. These values serve as guides for these leaders so they know what they should do, what they won't do, and what is most important to them.
- Leaders are known for living by their values. They don't just talk about them—they are obvious from the way that they live. They walk the walk and talk the talk. By leading from their values, their values become tangible and obvious to those they lead.

### **2) Inspire a Shared Vision**

- Leaders have a clear sense of what they want to accomplish—whether it is winning this year's championship game or getting more people involved in their organization. Leaders continue to develop their vision over time by paying attention to the things that are most important to them and to the other members of the team/organization/group.
- Leaders don't just care about what they care about—they care about what their followers care about. They help to create a vision and focus by being optimistic, enthusiastic, and by creating positive energy. The leader doesn't impose his or her vision on the group, but instead helps to guide the group in knowing its purpose.

### **3) Challenge the Process**

- Leaders are always looking for new ways to change, improve, and to grow. They are excited about new ideas, like to set the bar high for themselves and others, and are always looking for a new opportunity or way of doing something.

- Leaders are willing to take risks and like to learn from their mistakes. Leaders aren't afraid to fail and are not afraid for others to fail. They know how to break big jobs down into little ones and how to motivate people to bring out their best.

#### **4) Enable Others to Act**

- Leaders trust others. They don't assume that they have to do everything, or even that they can do everything. They trust others and help others to succeed for the good of all.
- Leaders share their power and invite others into decision making. A great leader creates other leaders by letting them take over important jobs and experience the responsibilities of leadership themselves.

#### **5) Encourage the Heart**

- Leaders like to brag about their group/team/organization. They are always looking for people doing things right and then give them credit for it. They say thank you a lot!
- Leaders create a spirit of community and team spirit. They know how to celebrate victories and hard work. They encourage people to care about each other and work together.

#### **Handout 1**

### **The Leadership Challenge**

*The Leadership Challenge* is a book by James Kouzes and Barry Posner. The following is a very brief summary of the Five Practices of Leadership that they uncovered by interviewing leaders in business, community organizations, and non-profits.

#### **Model the Way**

- Leaders know what they believe in and they develop a clear sense of their own values.
- Leaders are known for living by their values. They walk the walk and talk the talk.

#### **Inspire a Shared Vision**

- Leaders have a clear sense of what they want to accomplish – whether it is winning this year's championship game or getting more people involved in their organization.
- Leaders don't just care about what they care about – they care about what the other people in their group care about.

#### **Challenge the Process**

- Leaders are always looking for new ways to change, improve, and to grow.
- Leaders are willing to take risks and like to learn from their mistakes.

#### **Enable Others to Act**

- Leaders trust others and help others to succeed for the good of all.
- Leaders share their power and invite others into decision making.

#### **Encourage the Heart**

- Leaders are always looking for people doing things right and then give them credit for it.
- Leaders create a spirit of community and team spirit.

#### **Handout 2**

### **How Leaders Lead**

## **Model the Way:**

- Leaders know what they believe in and they develop a clear sense of their own values.
- Leaders are known for living by their values. They walk the walk and talk the talk.

Looking at your five leaders, what values do they have?

How do you know they hold these values? What do they do that demonstrates these values?

Good values serve as a guide in life. How were these leaders guided by their values?

## **Inspire a Shared Vision**

- Leaders have a clear sense of what they want to accomplish – whether it is winning this year's championship game or getting more people involved in their organization.
- Leaders don't just care about what they care about – they care about what the other people in their group care about.

Looking at your leaders, what did they want to accomplish?

How well did they do in getting others interested in what they cared about?

How were they influenced by the other people they worked with? Did they care about what the others in their group cared about?



How did they move their group forward?

## **Challenge the Process**

- Leaders are always looking for new ways to change, improve, and to grow.
- Leaders are willing to take risks and like to learn from their mistakes.

How did these leaders change, improve, or grow their group/team/organization?

How did these leaders fail on their way to succeeding?

How did these leaders set the bar high for both themselves and others? How did they challenge people?

Did these leaders change the way we think, feel, experience something, or change the way something is done? How?

## **Enable Others to Act**

- Leaders trust others and help others to succeed for the good of all.
- Leaders share their power and invite others into decision making.

Leaders trust others. How did these leaders demonstrate trust?

How did they get others involved in their vision/group?

Did these leaders make other people into leaders? How?

How would their team/group/organization be different if they weren't in leadership?

### **Encourage the Heart**

- Leaders are always looking for people doing things right and then give them credit for it.
- Leaders create a spirit of community and team spirit.

How do these leaders create a team spirit about what they are involved in?

Do they brag about the people or organization that they are a part of?

How do they help other people feel good about contributing or support what they do?

How do they give other people credit?

### Handout 3

## My Own Leadership

I am a leader right now when I...

The values that are most important to me right now are...

I look up to \_\_\_\_\_ as a leader because...

One way I hope to be a leader in the future is by...

One thing I have learned today about leadership is...

Which makes me want to...