

Guideposts for Success: Lesson Plans and Activities

Developed by the Institute for Educational Leadership

LESSON 25: LEADING BY EXAMPLE

AT-A-GLANCE

One of the most important tasks a young leader can develop is being able to be part of the group and lead at the same time. Being able to relate to people with a sense of their point of view can be very helpful—and may often take you very far. The purpose of this activity is to realize the importance of a leader being a team member.

Icebreaker Quote

Leadership should be more participative than directive, more enabling than performing.
-Mary D. Poole

Icebreaker Discussion

What would be some examples of how a leader might be participative? What is the difference between participative and directive? Do you agree with Poole's assessment of leadership? Why or why not?

Lesson/Activity

This activity can be completed virtually anywhere (indoors or outdoors). Divide the larger group into small groups by assigning numbers (starting with number 1). The even numbered groups will receive one set of instructions and the odd numbered groups will receive a different set of directions.

All groups will be instructed to find objects (either on their person or from the room or the environment)—ranging from A-Z (for example, **A**pple, **B**utton, and so on) and put all items into a bucket, a basket or a bag. Each team will decide on a leader—but each set of teams will not know the directions given to the other.

For the even numbered teams: the leader of this group may not find any of the objects. They may instruct others where to look, but they must stay put. Only the leader may put the items into the bag.

For the odd numbered groups: the leaders may help to find the objects, but they may be the only ones to put the items found into the bag.

Discuss the differences in the two groups. What was different when the leader could be part of the “finders?” Why were both leaders the only ones to put the items into the bag? What was it like for the teams whose leaders couldn't help to find the objects? How might you feel at work if you were always simply told what to do? What are the benefits being part of the “crowd?”

Reflection

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How do you think an individual's personality or character traits may influence their leadership styles? Do you consider yourself a leader now? If so, what type of leader are you. If you do not consider yourself a leader now, what type of leader do you hope to be someday?

Extension

Have students research leadership skills and leadership styles—and then research some of the famous leaders of the world. Have students identify the style of each leader—and then decide which style of leadership is most effective.