

# leadership

FOR STUDENT ACTIVITIES

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**NHS & NJHS edition**



# Charging the Front Lines

Instill Five Essential Characteristics in Student Leaders

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Throughout history, people from many backgrounds have been propelled into leadership roles, either by choice or necessity. Some unwavering warriors step up without much hesitation and assume the important task of leading. Others take a more subtle approach. Either way, leadership is based on the process of one person enlisting the aid and support of others in order to accomplish a common task.

While some students may have exhibited leadership skills from an early age, others develop over time. In an article, “Can You Teach Leadership: Confronting Conventional Thought,” business adviser and entrepreneur Melissa Vokoun challenges the fundamental question, “Can anyone become a leader?” and describes how conventional thought says that leadership is inborn. However, many believe that with the right opportunities, anyone can become a leader.

We aspire to develop students into leaders who not only lead but aren’t afraid to “follow the leader” as well. Below are five essential characteristics to instill in students to help them advance as leaders.

**Have a servant’s heart.** Exemplary leaders answer the plea for assistance by possessing a genuine interest in mankind. Robert Greenleaf, founder of the Center for Servant Leadership, once said, “Good leaders must first become good servants.” A selfless leader always leaves an unforgettable mark, recognizing the needs of those entrusted to their guidance. They understand that the very heart of leadership should be unencumbered by the need for personal recognition. A quality leader is one who does



more than what is expected—not every once in awhile, but all of the time.

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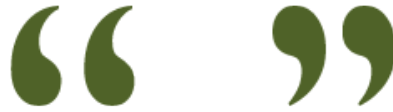
**Ignite the eagerness in others.** Those called to lead also bring hope and inspiration to others. By radiating positive energy, assessing and defining reality, outlining priorities and incorporating alternative points of view, effective leaders compose unique designs that declare, “When nothing is certain, anything is possible.” Igniting excitement for a common cause is not about random activity, it’s about setting a tone of optimism that moves others toward accomplishment.

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**Reinvent tendencies and techniques.** Setbacks can be setups for enormous growth. Those who don’t just survive but thrive throughout the reinvention process are resilient during setbacks, admit mistakes while learning lessons, and act boldly and decisively when making adjustments. They react promptly and give themselves permission to change for the better. The ability to reformulate trends and methods will always be part of the DNA of leadership.

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**Possess a courageous attitude.** According to Charles Kiefer, President of Innovation Associates, “Leadership is what the rest of us call it when we see someone doing something they love and we want to help.” Courageous



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leaders delight in knowing that those contributing feel as though they led the way in getting the job done. It takes a great deal of confidence to rise to the occasion of leading others down a path toward achievement. Understanding this, a leader must consider, “Does my attitude consist of the courage needed to not only inspire others to carry on during difficult times, but to encourage myself to keep learning, developing and refining the traits that demonstrate quality leadership?”

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**Be consistent in action.** Notable leaders are internally authentic and externally consistent—not just every now and then, but again and again. With consistency comes respect; with respect comes trust; and with trust comes the privilege to lead. These are the results leaders set their sights on.

In guiding students to their full potential as leaders, one truth remains: Those who are called into a position of teaching others have a vast amount of influence. Through this authority, students can be inspired to accomplish as much or as little as they see being modeled. By encouraging student leaders to be open-minded, engage in dialogue and applaud others for a job well done they will become champions for a cohesive team approach. If students develop these characteristics, they will be equipped to charge the front lines of leadership and succeed! ■

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© Vital Communications, Inc. Paul Vitale, founder of Vital Communications, Inc., is a professional speaker and author based in Little Rock, Arkansas. Vitale developed the dynamic curriculum and program “A Hero Within—Today’s Youth, Tomorrow’s Leaders.” For additional information, visit [aherowithin.com](http://aherowithin.com) or call 501-663-1454.

## <Identifiable Leadership—Lesson Activity>

### Lesson Objective

- Students will learn to recognize the unseen characteristics of a leader
- Students will become aware of their ability to foster the essentials of leadership

### Instructions

**Part One:** Have students carefully consider each of the five essential leadership traits: Have a servant’s heart, ignite the eagerness in others, reinvent tendencies and techniques, possess a courageous attitude, and be consistent in action. Instruct students to name one individual who models each trait and their reasoning. The individual can be someone they know, or a person from history or in the public spotlight. Example:

**Have a servant’s heart:** Mother Teresa – because she always put the needs of others above her own.

After they have listed their five examples, explain that while leaders are usually admirable role models, occasionally they demonstrate character traits that are less than desirable. Instruct the students to name one individual who does not exhibit each trait and why.

**Part Two:** After compiling their lists, have students answer the following questions:

- What have I learned from individuals in leadership positions that I want to imitate?
- What have I learned from individuals in leadership positions that I do not want to imitate?
- What can I do to become an exemplary leader?

This activity can be utilized as a group discussion or individual assignment.