

Brief Overview of Leadership Skills

Here are several resources which discuss the process of leadership development. Rather than simply repeat the information in these books, I recommend that you purchase one of these resources and use it to build stronger youth leaders.



1. *Total Youth Ministry. Ministry Resources for Youth Leadership Development* by Ann Marie Eckert with Maria Sanchez-Keane, Saint Mary's Press

2. *Foundations of Leadership for Youth Ministry: Leader's Guide.* by John Roberto, Don Bosco Multimedia

To assist you with your own leadership development, I would recommend one of these books:

1. *People Skills.* By Robert Bolton, PhD, Simon and Schuster Inc.
2. *The Leadership Challenge.* By James Kouzes and Barry Posner, Jossey-Bass publishers

Here are some of the topics to cover when training young leaders:

Personality Type

The key to being a good leader is understanding your personality type, and those of the people that you are working with. The Myers Briggs Test or the Kiersey Temperament Sorter consist of hundreds of questions which allow you to determine where your personality lies on four different character trait scales.

1. Extroverted vs. Introverted
2. Sensing vs. Intuitive
3. Thinking vs. Feeling
4. Judging vs. Perceiving

Once you are able to determine your personality, you can learn why you tend to respond the way that you do to other people, and can learn to handle leadership situations differently. This would be an effective exercise to run with your adults volunteers, or a youth leadership board.

Create a Mission statement

Taking the time to create a mission statement for yourself can help you to decide what is most important in your life, and the type of person that you want to be. Just the process of writing a statement is eye-opening. If you had to describe your purpose in life in one sentence, or a brief paragraph, what would you say? Once you have the statement written, you can analyze all of the things in your life which steer you from completing your mission. Leaders must learn to always make decisions based on whether their decision will help them to accomplish their mission, or lead them away from it.

Time Management

This is critical for effective leadership. Leaders require the ability to learn to set priorities in life, to stick to them, and to manage time so that they are able to accomplish the tasks which are most important to them.

Communication Skills

In order for somebody to lead others, they must be effective communicators. An effective communicator understands that:

- 10% of our communication is represented by the words that we say
- 30% is represented by our sounds
- 60% by our body language

An effective communicator is able to show through body language that they are paying attention to the conversation.

There are “roadblocks” to effective communication that effectively shut down a conversation.

1. Judging...”That is really stupid”,
2. Agreeing...”Well, I think you’re pretty.”
3. Ordering...”Don’t ever do that again.”
4. Sending Solutions...”You should do this...”
5. Diverting...”You should just blow the place up.”
6. Giving Logical arguments...”Let’s look at the facts...”
7. Reassuring...”Relax, everything will work out...”

Good listeners are able to show that they are following a conversation and care, without making some of the roadblocks listed above. This is done through “reflective listening” – acting as a mirror to the speaker. When done well, it can lead a person to make their own decisions, and show a deep sense of care.

1. Paraphrase what the person is talking about to show that you are listening
2. Reflect feelings...”so that made you angry?”
3. Reflect meanings...”you were angry because he left you”
4. Provide summaries of what you heard.

Win-Win negotiating

Whenever there is a disagreement between options, a leader is effective at coming up with solutions that make all of the parties feel good about the final decision.

1. Begin by looking at the problem from the other person’s point of view
2. Break the argument down to the key issue(s)
3. Determine what results would produce an acceptable solution for all parties
4. Brainstorm for other options/ deconstruct the problem.

Conflict Resolution

1. Treat the other person with respect
2. Listen until you experience the other side
3. State your views, needs, feelings.

Conflict Resolution = Original differences no longer exist

Conflict Control = Negative consequences left to a minimum

Four Basic Leadership styles

The following four leadership styles are actually a process that begins with directing and finishes with delegating. The process progresses as a follower gains competence in a task and goes from highly committed to a low-level of commitment and back again.

1. **Directing** – The leader defines the roles of the followers and tells them what, how, when, and where to do various tasks. Problem-solving and decision making are initiated solely by the manager. Solutions and decisions are announced; communication is largely one-way, and implementation is closely supervised by the leader.
2. **Coaching** – The leader provides a great deal of direction and leads with his/her ideas, but also attempts to hear followers' feelings about decisions as well as their ideas and suggestions. While two-way communication and support are increased, control over decision making remains with the leader.
3. **Supporting** – The focus of control for day-to-day decision making and problem solving shifts from leader to follower. The leader's role is to provide recognition and to actively listen and facilitate problem-solving/decision-making on the part of the follower.
4. **Delegating** – The leader discusses the problems with the subordinates until joint agreement is achieved on problem definition and then the decision making process is delegated totally to the follower.

The key to developing young leaders:

1. Create Parish leadership positions for young people.
 - look beyond the youth ministry program to find places that young people can serve the church. Different young people will enjoy different types of positions.
2. Invite young people into leadership.
3. Form them, and then get out of the way.