



Chapter One Taking the Lead

What it means to be a leader

FOCAL POINT: God’s design for every man is for him to be a leader as a servant-king. There may be many voices telling us what men ought to be, but we must make it a point to listen to our Creator and Father. All men must know that they are called to leadership in some form.

SPECIAL PREPARATION: Know the terms in this chapter well (virtue, value, gift, character) and how to explain them to others. Be ready to provide examples from your own life where you have seen these principles at work.

OPENING STORY: The aim of this story is to raise the question, “What does it mean to be a man of leadership?”

Kickoff 1 Kickoff

“Verso L’alto”

1 Explain:
To start each chapter, there is an opening story. Probably the best way to use this opening story is if each person reads a paragraph. I will start and then let’s go clockwise.

Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati was born in Turin, Italy on April 6, 1901. His mother, Adelaide Ametis, was a painter, and his father, Alfredo, was an agnostic and an influential senator. Many of the stories of Frassati’s short life come from his time as a student where he proved himself to be a man among boys when compared to his peers.

Frassati was both a man and saint in the truest sense of the words. Here was a man who loved mountain climbing, skiing, smoking his pipe, and playing practical jokes on his friends. At the same time, Frassati was known for his all night vigils in adoration, his devotion to the Blessed Eucharist, and his daily prayer life. He was a man of action who went into the homes of the poor and sick giving them food and, at times, paying for their children’s education. He marched in political protests and stood up against the immoral secular festivals of his day. On one of his mountain expeditions he coined the phrase “Verso L’alto”, meaning “toward the top”, which was applicable to his prayer life, his evangelization, and his mountain climbing.

Frassati was not remembered so much for his talents as much as for his charity which gained him so many friends. Through his loyalty, his infectious laugh,

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his willingness to embark on any adventure, he exercised a sort of magnetic attraction which created innumerable friendships. Below are some quotes from a few of his friends:

In his university’s Christian society (Cesare Balbo Circle) he was known as: “(the) member who, without looking for the honour, possesses innumerable friends and enjoys a pleasant authority over them, who knows each and is beloved by each, puts himself out to please them, accepts every duty and carries it out to the general satisfaction.”

From a rector of the mountain chapel that Frassati frequented: “I singled out Pier-Giorgio immediately from the others for the ascendancy which he exercised over his comrades and for the optimism which he exuded... his Catholicism, neither casual nor narrow, was vital, active, and rich in dynamic apostolicity.”

One of his friends, struck by his ability to attract others, said this: “His secret for gaining hearts and souls was his unalloyed charity.”

Finally, when his days as a student were coming to a close, and he was very near to the completion of his engineering degree, Pier Giorgio contracted the deadly poliomyelitis virus (polio). Though he was dying at a young age, Pier Giorgio went joyfully to his eternal reward in Heaven. Even with his last days he showed his care and regard for others. On one of his last days he scrawled out, in weak and shaky handwriting, instructions for getting vaccinations for a poor sick man he had been caring for.

(Adapted from *The Soul of Pier-Giorgio Frassati*, Mercier Press: Cork, Ireland, 1960.)

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Ask: What stood out to you about the life of Bl. Pier-Giorgio Frassati?

Answer: There are many things that stand out, but be sure to point out that he does not fit the mold of most people's image of saints. He was a man's man, who climbed mountains and smoked a pipe; while at the same time, he was in a vigorous pursuit of holiness and evangelization.

Ask: How did Pier-Giorgio attract others to himself? What was his method for taking leadership?

Answer: He was able to lead others through his example of charity. This example won them over, and then he was able to speak into their lives.

Leadership

Leadership

In a world that values fame, wealth and success, Frassati proved that true leadership stems from the witness of charity. It is this great love that attracts souls and gives one the credibility to lead others by example and speak into their lives; this is the Christ-like leadership that will change the world. In this chapter, we will look at what it means to be a leader in the image of Jesus Christ.

First, let's see what Jesus said about leadership and what kind of leader Jesus was. 2

2 *Ask: Could someone please read Matthew 20:20-28 and Philippians 2:3-10?*

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3 For Jesus, what does leadership mean?

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Answer: A leader serves others and lays down his life for the sake of others.

4 *Ask: How does this leadership compare to what the world normally associates with leadership?*

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As with many things, the Gospel message turns our whole way of thinking upside down. Jesus' death and humiliation on the cross actually leads to His exaltation. Whoever wishes to be great must become the servant of others. This is ultimately how God designed things in the beginning.

The Assault on Beauty

Answer: The world thinks of leadership in terms of power. Someone in power is in control of people, money, and resources; leadership isn't a place to be served.

5 In Genesis, Adam shared in God's role of having dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28) and keeping or protecting (The Hebrew *shamar* which is often translated "keep" means "to protect, to guard, to keep watch.") Thus, we see that man is to lead by *shamaring* everything that God entrusted to his care—including his bride, Eve. This is what his "dominion," his authority over the realm, means. He is a king, but not of the tyrannical variety. Rather, he is a *servant-king*, ruling in order that every subject in his kingdom may flourish.

6 **Read Genesis 3:1-13**

7 How would you describe Adam's response in verses 6 and 12, given his role as a servant-king of the garden?

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Ask: In what ways are you personally challenged by Jesus' vision and example of leadership?

The Assault on Beauty

5 *Read this paragraph (leader).*

6 *Ask: Could someone read Genesis 3:1-13?*

7 *Ask: How would you describe Adam's response in verses 6 and 12, given his role as a servant-king of the garden?*

Answer: He fails in both areas. He neither accepts his authority as he blames the sin on his wife, nor does he accept his role as a servant in failing to protect his wife.

Having What It Takes: Character Versus Gifting

8 Ask: What is the difference between character and gifting?

9 Ask: Could I have two volunteers—One to read *Philippians 3:17* and another to read *2 Timothy 3:10-11*?

10 Ask: What is Paul saying about his style of leadership? What is it based on?

Answer: Ultimately, leadership is based on our character—who we are,

not what we can do. Paul's leadership is based on modeling for others what it means to be a Christian. It is leadership first and foremost by witness. As Pope Benedict XVI has said, "To evangelize means: to show the path [to Christ] — to teach the art of living."

"There are serious and humbling implications [in the Fall] for every man. Don't miss this principle...: The entire family suffers when the head of the family falls short. When a man loses sight of this noble commission from God, he wallows, losing direction and perspective. When a man loses hope, his vision fades and his people perish. When a man loses direction, he tends to waste or abuse his God-given masculine energies and capacities on selfish and/or destructive pursuits...masculinity off-course and run amuck is incredibly destructive."

—Stu Weber, *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart: Bringing Strength into Balance*

Do you agree with Weber's analysis of the situation? Why, or why not?

Having What It Takes: Character Versus Gifting

Above, we looked at what kind of leadership Jesus Christ demands of His followers. We also analyzed where Adam, and at times all men, fail to be true leaders. Now, we want to see who we need to be in order to be a leader for Jesus Christ.

When the world thinks of leaders, it often thinks of people who have the most gifts. Our mindset is this: "If I'm a good speaker then I can lead" or "If I am popular and have a social presence then I have what it takes to be a great leader." Of course, the opposite of this happens as well. We might think, "I am not like him or her" or "I cannot do this or that," so therefore "I can't be a leader."

Leadership involves the use of gifts and talents, but one's gifts do not *determine* authentic leadership.

When St. Paul writes his letters to various Churches, he instructs them on what is important for leadership.

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9 Read *Philippians 3:17* and *2 Timothy 3:10-11*

10 What is Paul saying about his style of leadership? What is it based on?

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11 Read this paragraph (leader).

Tell the Swordsman example: Think of a swordsman. The quality of the sword he possesses is helpful, but if he doesn't know how to use it, he will be less effective than someone with a short, dull sword who knows how to fight. Furthermore, it does not matter how good your sword is if you do not have the courage or strength to use it well. The same holds true concerning our gifts.

Ask: Based on our discussion about gifts versus character-based leadership, do you think anyone can be a leader? Why or why not?

Answer: Anyone who is willing to be a witness and set an example can be a leader. Also, different leadership roles require different gifts; we are not all called to lead in the same way.

12 Ask: What about the examples of gifts versus character from the Bible? Did any example stick out to you?

11 A leader is not a pointer who says "go that way," but a pacesetter who says "follow me." Gifts are important and can be helpful in leadership, but they are just a tool.

12 The world is filled with people who have great gifts, but are not good leaders—so is the Bible. (Bible verses are given if you want to look at each example in more depth.)

Samson—He had the amazing gift of strength, but ultimately succumbed to the enemy because of his lust (Judges 16:1-31).

King Saul—His physical stature surpassed everyone in Israel, but he was not obedient and lost God's favor (1 Samuel 9:1-2; 1 Samuel 15:1-35).

King Solomon—He was known as the wisest man in the world, but he is plagued by greed and lust. His actions ultimately caused a civil war (Sirach 47:12-25).

On the other hand, the Bible is filled with examples of those who were not gifted that were used by God.

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13 Review these men. Then, ask: *Why do you think God uses the lowly and humbles the mighty?*

Possible Answer: By using the lowly, others can see how powerful God can be. It is because of Him they are effective, not just because of the person. It shows us how important God is in the equation and not just our talents.

Ask: How do you think the example of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati fits into the discussion about gifts versus character? What do you think attracted people to him more, his character or gifts? Why?

Answer: While Pier-Giorgio certainly was gifted, his friends most often noted his charity, something that wasn't dependent on his gifts.

Virtue Versus Values

14 Ask: *What is the difference between virtues and values?*

13 **Abraham**—He was old, a sojourner, and had a barren wife; yet, he became the father of many nations, not because of his gifts, but because of his great faith (Romans 4:18-20; Hebrews 11:13).

Moses—Despite his old age and poor speaking ability, he was called by God to confront the Egyptian Pharaoh. Through him, God delivered the people out of Egypt (Exodus 4:1-13). 5

Apostles—Most of the apostles were uneducated fisherman, and yet these were the men that Jesus chose to begin His Church and spread His message to the ends of the earth.

Virtue Versus Values

14 Our world often talks about what people value. Our Church often talks about virtue. What is the difference between the two and how can it help our understanding of leadership?

Values are *ideas* and *ideals*. Values are principles that we think are correct, but at the same time they can change over time and with experience.

For example, I might value honesty, but when money or pride are on the line, I might not actually be honest.

Virtue is not just thinking correctly, but doing something right and living in the proper way. Virtues don't change over time. 6

15 Ask: *Could someone please read CCC 1803?*

Big Three

16 Ask: *Could I have someone please read these closing paragraphs?*

15 "A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions" (CCC 1803).

In sum, virtues are habits, but not just habits. They are habits that help us to choose—and do—the good. This is often difficult. But over time, as these virtues are built up, we are able to choose the good *consistently*, with joy and with ease.

If we want to be great witnesses and lead through our character, virtue is an absolute must. Lots of people can talk about what they value, but the actions of virtues speak louder than words.

Big Three

16 So far we have looked at what leadership means from a Biblical perspective, and 6

examined how we can practically live it out through character and virtue. As we saw in the examples above, from Jesus Christ to Bl. Pierre Giorgio, from Abraham to the Apostles, it is one's character above all else that helps us draw others to us and allows us the opportunity to lead. Character is what sets us above the rest. In this study, we want to look at three virtues that are vital to the formation of our character during our time as college students: chastity, sobriety, and excellence. FOCUS refers to these as the "Big 3." By working on these virtues, we will strengthen our witness, build a strong will, and develop clarity of mind that will provide a foundation for our leadership.

Jesus Christ has called us to the light of the world and the salt of the earth. He wants us to let our light shine before men for all to see. 7