



Chapter One Taking the Lead

What it means to be a Leader

1 *Explain: To start off most chapters, 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.*

1 For Starters

At the age of eighteen, a woman named Gonxha from Albania was moved by a desire to become a foreign missionary. She left her home in September 1928 to join the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland. There, she received the name Sister Mary Teresa after St. Thérèse of Lisieux. In December of that same year, she departed for India, arriving in Calcutta in 1929. Sister Teresa was assigned to the Loreto Entally community in Calcutta and taught at St. Mary's School for girls.

In 1937, Sister Teresa made her Final Profession of Vows, becoming, as she said, the "spouse of Jesus" for "all eternity." From that time on she was called Mother Teresa.

She continued teaching at St. Mary's and in 1944 became the school's principal. Noted for her charity, unselfishness, courage, and her capacity for hard work, and bolstered by a natural talent for organization, she lived out her consecration to Jesus in the midst of her companions with fidelity and joy.

On September 10, 1946, during the train ride from Calcutta to Darjeeling for her annual retreat, Mother Teresa received her "inspiration," her "call within a call." On that day, in a way she would never explain, Jesus' thirst for love and for souls took hold of her heart, and the desire to satiate His thirst became the driving force of her life. Over the course of the next few weeks and months, by means of interior locutions and visions, Jesus revealed to her the desire of His heart for "victims of love" who would "radiate His love on souls." "Come be My light," He begged her. "I cannot go

alone.” He revealed His pain at the neglect of the poor, His sorrow at their ignorance of Him, and His longing for their love. He asked Mother Teresa to establish a religious community—the Missionaries of Charity—dedicated to the service of the poorest of the poor.

Nearly two years of testing and discernment passed before Mother Teresa received permission to begin her mission. In 1948, she went for the first time to the slums. She visited families, washed the sores of some children, cared for an old man lying sick on the road, and nursed a woman dying of hunger and tuberculosis. She started each day in communion with Jesus in the Eucharist and then went out, rosary in her hand, to find and serve Him in “the unwanted, the unloved, the uncared for.” After some months, she was joined, one by one, by her former students.

By the early 1960s, Mother Teresa began to send her Sisters to other parts of India. Eventually, she opened houses on every continent and in almost all of the communist countries, including the former Soviet Union, Albania, and Cuba. By 1997, Mother Teresa’s sisters numbered nearly 4,000 members and were established in 610 foundations in 123 countries of the world. She died in September 5, 1997 and was beautified on October 19, 2003.

(Adapted from http://www.vatican.vax/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031019_madre-teresa_en.html)

For Starters Discussion Questions

Ask: What was it that made Mother Theresa a great saint?

Answer: Her work with the poor showed her fidelity to the Gospels. Most of all, she had great love.

Ask: How did Mother Theresa’s “call within a call” change her life?

Answer: Instead of teaching wealthy Indian girls in a school, she was called to reach souls by living a radical poverty in the slums of India and caring for the poorest of the poor.

Ask: What was the impact of Mother Theresa’s example to both those she taught and to those throughout the world?

Answer: Her former students decided to join Mother Theresa in her work. Many

others throughout the world joined her work by: being a sister or brother in her order, volunteering with the sisters of Calcutta, or taking action within their own communities.

Leadership

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

3 *Ask: For Jesus, what does leadership mean?*

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?*

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 serve; it is a place to be served.

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

Leadership

In a world that values fame, wealth, and success, Mother Theresa proved that true leadership stems from the witness of charity. It is this great love that attracts souls. *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 **Read Matthew 20:20-28 and Philippians 2:3-10**

3 For Jesus, what does leadership mean?

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

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.

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Having What It Takes: Character Versus Gifting

5 Ask: *What is the difference between character and gifting?*

5 Having What It Takes: Character Versus Gifting

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Answer: Ultimately, leadership is based 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.”

8 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.

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

10 Review these Bible characters, 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

8 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 tools.

9 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.)

Eve—She was created in God's image without Original Sin, but she succumbed to the temptations of the devil.

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 was 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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10 **Hannah**—She was barren, but she prayed to God and promised to offer her son in service of the Lord. She gave birth to Samuel who was one of the great prophets of the Old Testament (1 Samuel 1:1-28).

Mary—Although she was a poor peasant girl, God chose her to be the mother of His Son.

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

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of the earth.

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because of Him they are effective, and not because of their own merits. This shows us how important God is in the equation, and not just our own talents.

Ask: How do you think the example of Bl. Mother Theresa fits into the discussion about gifts versus character? What gifts did she have? What do you think attracted people to her more, her character or gifts? Why?

Answer: While Bl. Teresa was certainly gifted, her sisters and those who knew her most often noted her charity and her humility, two qualities not dependent upon her personal gifts.

Virtue Versus Values

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

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

Virtue Versus Values

11 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.

12 *“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 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.

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Big Three

13 *Read these paragraphs (leader).*

13 Big Three

So far we have looked at what leadership is from a Biblical perspective, and have examined how we can practically live it out through character and virtue. As we saw in the examples above, from Jesus Christ to Bl. Teresa, from Abraham to the Apostles, it is one's character above all else that helps us draw others to us and allows us the

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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 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.

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14 *Review these action points with your group for the upcoming week.*

Action Point

14 Applying the Scriptures to Your Life

- 1.) Think about who has impacted your life. What have they done that was so effective? How was their witness impactful?
- 2.) Think about how your actions influence others this week.
- 3.) Read a portion of the Gospels and examine how Jesus served others.

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