



Developing tomorrow's leaders

'She's a born leader,' is a common saying. Some children show obvious signs of leadership at a young age. They organise their playmates, show others what to do, and when adults ask questions they are the first to respond. Their friends often willingly follow their lead.

Although some people seem to be born with leadership qualities, these qualities can be learned and developed. Perhaps everyone cannot become a great leader, but it makes sense to spread leadership tasks and responsibilities as widely as possible. Sharing leadership helps people to work together more effectively.

Leadership and spirituality

A good leader should be concerned with the personal development of those she leads. This involves encouraging the growth of the inner self in relation to God or a Higher Being. It also means that the leader should be promoting good relationships between people for the good of society. A leader has a moral influence for good or for bad. In short, a good leader should be concerned with fostering spiritual values for the benefit of the individuals that she leads and for society as a whole.

Of course this does not always happen. Leadership involves power and power can be abused. Some leaders use their power and influence for personal gain or to promote philosophies that can be destructive, corrupt and even evil. Hitler of Germany or Marcos of the Philippines are obvious examples.

Leadership development

Leadership development can begin at an early age. Everyone needs to know that she can make a difference to the kind of life she has and to the world at large. Adults who have any kind of contact with young children can play a part.

Building self esteem

Leadership development begins with the building of self esteem. Nothing is more important.

The person who respects and values herself will respect and value others. She will have the confidence to try and not to be crushed by failure. She will not let her feelings be easily hurt. She will be philosophical about criticism even when it seems unjust because she knows she is a person of worth.

Listening skills

The child who experiences adults who listen to what she is saying and appreciate her opinion will follow that good example. The best leaders are those who listen to other people. They can motivate their followers but also share their leadership. Listening is one half of the communication process. It has often been said that we have been given two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we talk. It is a hard lesson for some of us and takes practice.

Communication skills

Communication skills are vital to effective leadership. Children and adults all need to learn how to speak and to write clearly. We want others to understand what we are trying to say.

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But what people hear does not only depend on the words that we say but the way that we say it. Our message is heard through the sieve of the hearer's experience and knowledge. This can distort what we are communicating.

Creativity

Creativity is another major component of good leadership, one that we can all encourage in the children that we know. This can be done by helping them to dream dreams, to broaden their means of self-expression, to listen to and to make up stories, to read and to play imaginative games. When you stimulate people's creative faculties, you are helping to foster visionary leaders for tomorrow.

Leadership training

There are many organizations that specialise in leadership training. A good leader is someone who is willing to develop herself. WAGGGS is amongst those who offer specific

courses and seminars in leadership training. Indeed, membership of WAGGGS ensures that girls and young women have the opportunity to grow as leaders. WAGGGS' Mission Statement affirms this:

WAGGGS' Mission is:

*To enable girls and young women
To develop their fullest potential
As responsible citizens of the world.*

All those involved in leading Girl Guides/Girl Scouts throughout the world have a responsibility not only to model good leadership practice but to encourage and to develop the leadership skills of those with whom they work. They make a very real contribution to the building of a better world.



The nature of leadership

The kind of leadership we experience throughout our life has a great impact on our spiritual development. By the nature of their role, leaders provide models of behaviour. They can be positive or negative, nurturing or destructive, affirming or discouraging. We are indeed fortunate if we have good leaders and teachers to inspire us.

Our first leaders are our parents, perhaps grandparents, older siblings, other relatives or child-care helpers. The way in which they exercise their leadership has a profound impact on our lives. We learn about leadership very early in life and what we learn, even at a young age, affects our spiritual development.

Parents and teachers together have the first responsibility to develop a sense of wonder and awe in the world for children. They have many opportunities to speak of another dimension to life through word and example. For some that involves introducing children to God, to gods or to a Higher Being. But regardless of religious belief, the way in which we care for a very young child says something about our attitude not only to each other but also to the entire created world. This also contributes to the spiritual growth of the child.

There are many types or models of leadership and only a few are included below. You probably know others. All of them help us to understand what leadership may be about. They are used in different situations and can produce different reactions in those being lead.

Authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership

The authoritarian leader must have total control. She alone makes the decisions for those she leads. She is more concerned about getting the task done than about the feelings or concerns of others.

At the other end of the spectrum is the laissez-faire leader. She takes little responsibility for anything, but simply allows events to unfold at will. She does not care greatly about the completion of the task as long as everyone seems happy.

Somewhere in the middle is the democratic leader. She seeks out and acts upon the opinions of those she leads so that they have a shared goal and action plan to they know how they will reach it. She is equally concerned about the task and the people, and periodically checks to make sure everyone is comfortable with the process.

Transformational leadership

The person practising transformational leadership tries to:

- motivate those she leads to find a common sense of direction
- present a vision that is understood, shared and appreciated by the whole group
- energise the creativity of those she leads and empower them to act
- seek their commitment and trust them to carry out the vision in appropriate action.

This is a transforming experience for the leader, for those she leads and for a whole organization.

The nature of leadership

Team leadership

Leadership teams of two or more people can work together effectively for the advancement of the whole group. Team leadership functions most effectively when:

- team members share fully in the planning process
- recognise and use each other's talents
- complement each other's talents and knowledge
- are aware of the needs of the group
- facilitate the participation of everyone
- share the responsibility for taking action with the whole group
- recognise and acknowledge the contributions of members of the group to achieving the goal.

Situational leadership

According to the situational leadership model, there is no 'best' way to lead a group. Each learning event is different with different participants and therefore demands a leadership style specifically tailored to the group. A successful leader is flexible and can adapt her style to suit the situation.

If the group is greatly lacking in knowledge, the leader will practise a strongly directional style. She will emphasise the task at hand more than group relationships. The content i.e. 'what it is about' is more important to the group than the process i.e. 'how we do it'.

If the group has some knowledge, but members lack self-assurance, the leader will be directive but also very encouraging. She will try to build self-esteem and good relationships within the group

When groups are self-assured and eager to tackle the task, the leader will stand back and let them take action. Her chief function is to challenge and to facilitate.

Shared leadership

Shared leadership is probably the most flexible. It works on the theory that everyone has leadership skills to contribute in order to achieve a common goal. Thus the actual leadership changes from one person to another depending on the skills or knowledge needed at any given time. Shared leadership:

- includes everyone in the planning
- sets ground rules agreed to by everyone
- invites everyone to express an opinion
- keeps everyone fully informed i.e. no secret agendas
- accepts and uses everyone's talents.

Style and task

Leadership is not only a question of style. It is also a question of task. For example, WAGGGS' leaders have to remain true to the mission of the organization. They have to lead girls and young women in a particular way in order to develop behaviour and attitudes that reflect the values that WAGGGS promotes.

Leadership and spirituality

The kind of leadership that we face or exercise affects our spirituality. Some faiths appear to have authoritarian leaders whilst for others a more shared leadership model is practised. As always, it is important to be tolerant of each other's understanding of leadership as it operates within each faith community.

No matter how good the leader is, you as 'followers' also have responsibilities. This is equally true whether the leader is the boss at work, the president of an organization you belong to or your spiritual leader. You are a co-participant in learning. You are responsible for your own growth.

When you make a decision to grow, to change your behaviour and to accept new challenges, you are creating a new path in your life. To do this successfully, you have to explore and to celebrate your talents. You have to recognise

The nature of leadership

your weaknesses and try to strengthen them. A leader can motivate and inspire you, but you have to want to change and grow too.

Leadership and group decision-making

The way in which decisions are made in any group depends on the power structure and nature of the group's leadership. This is as true of a unit as small as a couple or a family as it is to a nation. The way in which a decision has been reached can have a profound affect on our spirituality. Was I listened to? Was I heard? Was I even invited to contribute? Does my opinion carry weight or can I easily be ignored? Respect for the individual is integral to spiritual development. The effect of decisions on our lives and on the lives of others also affects our spiritual growth and the spiritual growth of our neighbour.

In your family, your school, your workplace, your faith community, your volunteer organizations, your city and your nation. Who is chiefly responsible for making decisions in each of these? What process is used to make them? What part do you play in the decision-making in these places?

We are much more committed to carrying out decisions that we have helped to make. If we have little input, we will have little interest in what happens. But if we are involved in planning or in consultation, we will have a real stake in the outcome.

Decisions are usually made in one of the following ways:

Authoritarian decision-making

One or two people make all the decisions, down to minute details, and expect everyone else to abide by them without question. On the surface, this is efficient and time-saving. But it often leads to disagreement and

resentment. If discussion and questions are forbidden, misinterpretation of the decision may be widespread.

Decision-making by majority vote

This is the common parliamentary model of decision-making. Issues are put to a vote and the majority wins. It works reasonably well. Unfortunately there are losers as well as winners and they may feel disgruntled and unwilling to co-operate.

Group decision before expert decision-making

Another method allows those concerned for the outcome of a decision to make their views known through group discussion or presentations of their position. The final decision still rests with an expert, a judge or the authorities. If they recognise and act on the discussion they have heard, people are reasonably satisfied that their expert opinions have influenced the outcome.

Decision-making by consensus

This is the most difficult form of decision-making and also very time consuming. Consensus means that everyone concerned reaches a common understanding and agreement. Everyone agrees to agree. At the end, all will feel that they had a strong part in the decision they have reached. This may be impossible in some cases but it is always highly satisfying when it is achieved.



Parents as family leaders

Bringing up a child

It is generally agreed by social scientists, educators and psychologists that children's attitudes and learning patterns are set in the first six years of life. Children's caregivers in the early years bear a heavy responsibility. For most children, parents have a great influence.

People often say things like: 'Doesn't she look like her mother or father?' Even more interesting and amusing is the way a child's mannerisms, way of walking or standing, a look or a turn of phrase are just like the parents. Is it any wonder that children acquire their parents' attitudes?

There are numerous parenting courses and theories about how to bring up a child. It is important for both parents to agree and to act consistently as this gives children a sense of security. Parents who demonstrate love and respect for each other and for their children lay a strong foundation for future relationships. Such children grow into adults who know how to love. Parents who encourage independence are paving the way for responsible actions and decision-making skills.

Children learn much through overhearing what adults say and copying what adults do. They are extraordinarily observant and intensely interested in how the adult world works. When children see adults getting away with dishonest behaviour or hear them being unkind to others, they think it is a smart thing to do. They feel big and think that they are important if they act in the same way.

A high percentage of adults who abuse children were themselves abused as children. It may be thought that having suffered such mistreatment people would shrink from ever doing such a thing to a child. Cruelty breeds cruelty in a vicious circle and this kind of parental behaviour gets a lot of media attention. Fortunately most parents are part of another kind of circle, one that demonstrates love, caring and life in all its fullness. This is parental leadership at its best.

Children and spirituality

Parental influence on the spiritual development of children is profound. Yet it is often ignored. If we concentrate on the adult world, we can lose sight of the vulnerability and innocence, the joyousness and the love of childhood. In short, we may lose touch with the child-like spirit. Parents contribute to the developing spirituality of a child, yet a child equally has something to teach parents about the spiritual dimension of life. Their search for answers from the 'why is it bedtime?' to the 'what happens if you die?' give adults plenty of questions to think about. Children have their own wisdom and can point adults to real answers: to openness, generosity, unconditional love and trust. These are spiritual values. Children also encourage adults to find a language to explain their faith or lack of it. Bringing a child up within a religious tradition is an opportunity for adults as well as children to learn more about their faith community and beliefs.



Personal decision-making

The road to maturity

Becoming a fully developed person, no matter how old we are, calls for making decisions. Sometimes this is very hard. If we are the kind of person who just wanders through life letting things happen, we will find decision-making uncomfortable and unfamiliar. If most decisions have been made for us by someone else, we may be apprehensive, even frightened to take definitive steps on our own. If we are used to making quick judgements habitually, we may not always decide wisely. If, however, we are able to see all sides of an issue and weigh the factors involved, our choices stand a good chance of being the right ones for us and for others who may be involved.

We need to begin to develop decision-making skills early in life. Children can make choices when they are quite young. Parents should agree on what choices they will let toddlers make and how best to encourage them to choose wisely. Good beginnings will nurture self-confidence and responsibility.

In our youth, we dreamed about what we wanted to be when we grew up. We began to look at the options for our life. We thought about what we enjoyed and the talents that we had. But we had to be realistic and to consider the education that our family could afford our own talents and abilities, possible employment opportunities, how our decisions might affect our family and what the future might hold. To make a wise decision, we had to search for the relevant facts, ask others for advice and reflect on the positive and negative possibilities of several courses of action. Then we could set a goal and pursue it with some expectation of success.

Things to bear in mind when we make decisions

Decisions are never made in a vacuum. They always affect others and have both short-term and long-term consequences that may be positive or negative. Political, cultural, ethical, religious and legal considerations all play a part too. We have to make decisions carefully.

If we live in a democratic society, we have the privilege and right to choose freely, but our choices must not deny others the same right. In some societies, people do not have the right to choose what they want to do. Their freedom is proscribed by the state. One third of women worldwide are considered the property of their nearest male relative: husbands, fathers, brothers, grandfathers or uncles. Laws and customs curtail their freedom.

Ethical decisions are very complex and are often affected by religious belief. For example, Buddhism teaches that all life is sacred so Buddhists would try not to kill even an ant. Christians would not think twice about killing an ant, but teach that all human life is sacred. Yet for some Christians, abortion is totally wrong, whilst for others it is not always the wrong thing to do. In Islam, human blood is sacred and cannot be spilled without justification. If anyone violates the sanctity of human blood by killing a soul without justification, the Qur'an equates it to the killing of all humankind. Hindu scriptural texts inspire decision making for Hindus. Hindu texts teach that all life is sacred and that no animal should be killed. But not all Hindus, particularly the younger generation, agree with this. For example, abortion was initially forbidden but today abortion is legalised.

Personal decision-making

It is an advantage to have someone with whom you can talk through a decision. That is not to say that someone will make the decision for you, but they will listen and advise. That person may be a teacher, priest, mentor, friend, WAGGS' leader, parent or other family member.

Spiritual development

Decision-making, like a coin, has two sides. A new course of action may mean giving up something comfortably familiar. We may decide to live a less extravagant lifestyle, to volunteer regularly at an AIDS hospice, to read the scriptures for half an hour each day, to eat only nutritious food, to teach someone to read or to do some other activity that demands that we give up time or money that we were accustomed to spend on something else. The consequences of these decisions can contribute to our spiritual growth and understanding.

As in all other parts of life, our spiritual development depends on our ability to take responsibility for our own thoughts, feelings and actions. It can be risky, as it is easier and safer to go with the crowd. Peer pressure can be a real problem. We need courage when we decide to step out in a new direction because the road to maturity can make us feel vulnerable and unsure. Again, that is where someone you can talk to, someone you truly admire can be of help. The road to maturity is made up of the consistent accumulation of small decisions made wisely.



Being a Girl Guide/Girl Scout leader

All those involved in leading Girl Guides/Girl Scouts throughout the world have a responsibility to model good leadership. Youth leaders have an influential position in the lives of young people. They become role models. Leaders of Girl Guides/Girl Scouts throughout the world have a particular role in developing the spiritual dimension of Girl Guides/Girl Scouts. They also have the additional task of encouraging and developing the leadership skills of all members. WAGGGS' Mission is:

*To enable girls and young women
To develop their fullest potential
As responsible citizens of the world.*

The development of the fullest potential of an individual is a lifelong task to which leaders can only contribute. But that contribution is vital. In Module One, we looked at the spiritual dimension that is intrinsic to Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting. The link between the Promise, the Law and spirituality is one that leaders should model. You may like to look again at the different sections and ask yourself, how do I model these values in the leadership that I offer?

How do I encourage the growth of a spiritual dimension within the lives of the girls and young women with whom I work? Do I show each individual person the respect that I should thereby setting an example?

Training of trainers

A good leader is always willing to explore and to develop herself.

We have noted four aspects of leadership development:

- building self esteem
- listening skills
- communication skills
- creativity.

Are you developing and improving those skills within yourself and within the members that you lead? On-going training of trainers is important and it is vital that you take appropriate opportunities to review and to improve your expertise.

As a trainer, it is worth spending time going through the activities in this module. What style of leadership do you offer? If you are fortunate enough to work in a team, how are decisions reached?

Being a Girl Guide/Girl Scout Leader is a demanding yet exciting vocation. It has its drawbacks but also its satisfactions. It can teach you a lot about yourself, your values, your weaknesses and your strengths. It gives you the opportunity to be part of a team of leaders all with a common aim. It gives you the chance to contribute to the development of Girl Guides/Girl Scouts worldwide. It gives you a sense of purpose. It also gives you the opportunity to travel and to represent the Association at region or world meetings. Most importantly you have the role to encourage and assist the girls and young women you lead to explore their own spiritual journeys.



Women as leaders in society

Purpose

To look at how women carry out their leadership roles in society

Materials needed

Pens/ pencils, flipchart/blackboard (optional)

What to do

1. Working together as a group, invite participants to brainstorm a list of women leaders in their local community, country and throughout the world.

Discuss the following questions together:

2. How have these women leaders influenced you?
3. What characteristics do they show? Are these positive or negative in your opinion?
4. What is their leadership style?
5. Invite a woman leader to come and speak to the group about being a leader in society today.



A story about theft

Purpose

An exercise in listening skills

Materials needed

The story and questions below

What to do

Read the story aloud once to the group and then ask them to write down answers to the questions below.

The Story

A middle aged woman earned her living by selling a variety of hand embroidered scarves that she made herself. Every morning she trudged early to the market to sell them. She displayed them on a table and kept her cash box on the side. On this particular day the market was full of tourists and her entire attention was focused on selling her scarves and making a lot of money. Suddenly she needed change and she looked around for her cash box. To her horror, it had disappeared! She was panic stricken and looking around she saw two rough looking young men running with her box. In a feeble voice she shouted, 'Thieves! Thieves! They have stolen my money! Someone hurry! Catch them! Run!' A tall tourist in a brightly coloured outfit ran after the youths and caught one who was hugging the cash box. But lo and behold the cash box was empty!

Directions

1. Read the story aloud once to the group.
2. Ask them to write down the answers to the following questions:
 - a) What kind of merchandise was the woman selling?
 - b) When did she usually go to the market?
 - c) What did the woman say when she discovered her cash box was missing?
 - d) Describe the tourist who came to her rescue.
 - e) What did the youth look like?
 - f) Did the youth really steal the woman's money?
 - g) What is the lesson that you learn from this story?

Answers

- a) Beautiful scarves, made by the woman.
- b) Early every day.
- c) 'Thieves! Thieves! They have stolen my money! Someone hurry! Catch them! Run!'
- d) Tall, wearing a brightly coloured outfit, sex unknown.
- e) We don't know.
- f) We don't know.
- g) You cannot judge from appearances. You need the full facts before making a judgement.

Discuss how well everyone listened to the story? Did anyone make any assumptions that were not based on the information given? Would everyone make good witnesses? What implications does this have for making hasty judgements?



Discover your leadership style

Purpose

To give participants the opportunity to look at different styles of leadership in order to begin to decide their own leadership style.

Materials

Table below

What to do

Either give people a copy of the table below or read the questions to them and get them to answer 'yes' or 'no' to them. Explain the scoring system.

Tick the appropriate answer.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Do you enjoy being in charge of things? Yes/No</p> <p>2. Do you think that it is best to explain reasons for a decision before carrying it out, even if it takes extra time and effort? Yes/No</p> <p>3. Do you prefer planning and paperwork to working directly with people? Yes/No</p> <p>4. When you meet someone new, do you ask for her/his name rather than introducing yourself first? Yes/No</p> <p>5. Do you share new developments affecting those you work with as a matter of course? Yes/No</p> <p>6. When you are assigning tasks, do you outline how you want them done in detail? Yes/No</p> | <p>7. Do you think a leader should be distant from those under her charge? Yes/No</p> <p>8. When you are setting a date for a meeting, do you chose the one most suitable to you rather than putting it to a vote? Yes/No</p> <p>9. As leader, do you prefer to make most of the decisions? Yes/No</p> <p>10. Do you find it fairly easy to fire someone who is incompetent? Yes/No</p> <p>11. Do you think that the friendlier you are with people, the better you are able to lead them? Yes/No</p> <p>12. You have presented your solution to a difficult problem to an assistant who immediately finds fault with it. Are you dissatisfied that the problem still exists rather than angry with your critic? Yes/No</p> <p>13. Do you think that it is a good idea to have clear punishment for violation of rules? Yes/No</p> <p>14. Do you try to persuade people or make it clear that your decisions are final because you are the boss? Yes/No</p> <p>15. Do you leave it to your partners or assistants to get in touch with you about day to day matters? Yes/No</p> <p>16. Do you think everyone in your group owes you personal loyalty? Yes/No</p> |
|---|--|



Discover your leadership style

17. Do you step in and settle problems yourself rather than try some other method? Yes/No
18. Do you think differences of opinion in a group are a healthy sign? Yes/No

To score

Count the number of 'yes' answers you had for the questions, grouped as follows:

Group A - questions 1,4,7,10,13,16

Group B - questions 2,5,9,11,14,17

Group C - questions 3,6,8,12,15,18

If you had the most 'yes' answers in Group A, you are probably an autocratic leader.

If your 'yes' answers are highest in Group B, you are probably a democratic leader.

If your 'yes' answers are highest in group C, you are inclined to be a laissez-faire leader.

Knowing your leadership style, may explain problems that you have had in the past. You can work to change the way you do things in the hope of avoiding future problems. Each person has her own style of leading a group. It has been proven many times over that the democratic style is the most effective.