



# Building Everyday

# LEADERSHIP

## in All Teens

Revised &  
Updated

PROMOTING ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS

FOR RESPECT AND SUCCESS

- Includes student inventory of leadership skills and attitudes
- 21 sessions, 45 minutes each
- Digital content provides all handouts plus 39 pages of bonus materials and activities



Mariam G. MacGregor, M.S.

Previous Edition was an  
AEP Distinguished Achievement Award Winner

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MARIAM G. MACGREGOR, M.S.

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PUBLISHING®



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## DEDICATION

To my mom (1935–2004) and dad,  
who have always believed in me, and more  
importantly, taught me to believe in myself,  
especially when I was a teenager.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful that *Building Everyday Leadership* is being used to inspire 21st Century youth leaders worldwide. This book—both the original and this updated edition—would never exist without the insights, engagement and support of the following:

Jeanne Rosenberger, vice provost for student life and dean of students at Santa Clara University, who served as an incredible mentor in my early career, became one of my dearest friends and who continues to inspire me today.

Tom Mordue, retired principal of Vantage Point Alternative High School in Thornton, CO. Years ago Tom took a chance by hiring me and allowing me to teach leadership to youth-at-risk in a way that was very different than the norm. This launched the prototype curriculum, which is now the *Building Everyday Leadership* curriculum.

Kristin Aarestad, *still* one of the best language arts and diversity teachers out there, who eagerly and consistently engages her students as leaders no matter the subject being addressed.

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Ruth Taswell, Eric Braun, and Darsi Dreyer, my talented editors at Free Spirit over the years, who each provided support in my quest to create a “better mousetrap” in terms of how leadership talents are nurtured in kids and teens.

Alyssa Riggs, who kept my kids happy, healthy, and safe, and serves as a sounding board for talking through activities and ways to keep students engaged when learning to lead.

Hayes, Colt, and Lily, each of whom reinforces everyday how young leadership can be taught and how it is learned. Together, they face and deal with daily situations that require “attitudes of leaders” to succeed.

My sweet husband Michael, who unfailingly supports me in my pursuit to write and teach about leaders in ways that make a difference in the lives of teens, the adults working with them, and generations of everyday leaders to come.

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## FOREWORD

by Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D.

Every day there are opportunities for teens to take the lead among their peers, and all teens have the potential to learn the attitudes and skills that enable them to do this. It's a myth that leadership can't be taught. Viewing leadership as non-learnable character traits or believing that only certain kids can lead dooms society to limited leadership. It's far healthier and more productive to recognize it's possible for everyone to lead. With *Building Everyday Leadership in All Teens* and its companion guidebook for teens, *Everyday Leadership*, you can make a tremendous difference in helping young people learn how to become everyday leaders.

Leadership development is fundamentally self-development. The primary instrument of a leader, teen or adult, is one's self. To teach leadership, then, requires helping teens explore "inner territory"—who they are and what they care about. If, for example, in teaching leadership skills, we say, "Leaders stand up," we also must help teens figure out what they're going to stand up on (their foundations). For teens to grapple with this idea amidst their struggles for independence can be intense. But if you help teens realize they are indeed leaders, then you can assist them in using their unique talents to serve the common good while pursuing individual interests.

Using the tools and techniques within this book and the teen guidebook, you can counsel and provide an important perspective for teens to help them practice

leadership skills. Author Mariam MacGregor provides ample opportunities for teens to discover, strengthen, hone, and enhance their leadership skills. A talented educator, she acts every day on her passion for youth leadership and for liberating the leader within every teen, including those outside the traditional leadership venues of student government and athletics. In both her books, she's captured teens' interests, language, struggles, and dilemmas as they seek to find out more about who they are and what they care about.

In my own work with teens, as well as adults, I'm constantly reminded of the power within every person. Each of us has a capacity to do more than what we're usually asked. Again and again, when given the assignment "to go out and lead" (for example, make a difference in some organization), teens magically do just that. It's awe-inspiring to see what young people are capable of bringing forth within themselves when motivated to do so. Educating young people is truly the lever to change the world. I join Mariam MacGregor in saying, "With your guidance, teens can gain a greater understanding of who they are and how that translates into *how* to lead."

Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D.

Dean and Professor of Leadership

Santa Clara University, Silicon Valley, California

Coauthor, *The Leadership Challenge* and *A Leader's Legacy*

## PREFACE

# Inspiring Teens to Take the Lead

You probably know many young people who have a positive outlook about themselves and their future. Just as teens can choose to have a positive attitude, they can acquire a “leadership attitude.” With a leadership attitude, people take action when they see the need and encourage others to do the same.

Yet many people in the world, young and old, are not *prepared* to take the lead. Some may not know how; others may not realize their own potential to do so. This curriculum guide is written specifically to support your efforts as an educator or youth worker to instill in *any* adolescent a leadership attitude. It helps you teach young people how to take responsibility and action—how to take the lead.

With the accompanying guide for teens, *Everyday Leadership*, you can help teens develop confidence in their own leadership attitude and potential. You can encourage them to discover the rewarding challenges and successes of being a leader, regardless of whether they’re building leadership skills from the ground up or improving skills they already have. You can help them discover that leadership opportunities, both great and small, arise in seemingly unremarkable everyday situations.

## Connecting Teens to Leadership

Typically, leadership experiences have been reserved for those students who are the “best” or the “brightest.” Often these are teens who are already inclined to run for student council or plan the prom, or who demonstrate certain leadership attitudes and actions before beginning a leadership class or program. If we focus only on these teens as candidates for leadership roles, however, we limit the potential so many other students have to offer. We draw a line rather than open up possibility. With

boundaries created before some young people even have a chance to try taking the lead, it is no surprise they often hesitate to do so when an opportunity arises.

Some teens also may doubt themselves or think being a leader means knowing the right thing to do all the time. They see only so-called good kids or successful students having what it takes to be a leader.

As educators and youth leaders, however, it is our job to teach teens that leading is as much about promoting positive attitudes and respect as it is about achieving success. *Building Everyday Leadership* is an engaging, age-appropriate approach to teaching and preparing teen leaders. Rather than modify adult texts or copy handouts and articles that usually relate leadership to business or politics, this curriculum guide relates leadership to situations specific to teens. You can create a safe setting where participants actively practice and test leadership skills and learn what it means to be an effective leader. Teens will get up and move, think and write, consider their individual ideas, work together, and act as leaders.

## Making a Difference

Given the chance, teens who learn leadership skills will benefit in many ways. During the five years I taught leadership classes as a counselor at an alternative high school, students who successfully completed the leadership curriculum generally had:

- better attendance rates
- higher retention rates and fewer failed classes
- positive participation and contribution to class discussions
- greater confidence in speaking at meetings or assemblies and taking on peer leadership roles

- greater confidence in resolving conflict without the assistance of adult staff
- increased participation in optional extracurricular activities (those not required by probation or diversions programs)
- increased empathy during community service projects
- higher average quarterly GPAs than nonleadership participants
- increased involvement in school decision-making processes
- increased interest in attending postsecondary school or a vocational training program (for example, voluntarily taking the ACT, attending college information sessions, completing entrance exams, and applying for financial aid prior to graduating)

Most importantly, the opportunities in this curriculum guide are intended for *all* youth, not just a select few. Every teen has the potential to lead. Challenge the teens you work with to try new skills, and they will succeed. This success will come from the self-satisfaction that occurs when they realize they are capable and respected for taking a stand, taking the lead, and making a positive difference.

Teaching teens about leadership also will allow you to solidify your own leadership values and expectations, and your role as a leader.

Please join me on Twitter (@mariammacgregor) for conversations, questions, or to share your experiences on youth leadership and engaging kids and teens as leaders. Or you can reach me at:

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*Mariam G. MacGregor, M.S.*

## INTRODUCTION

# Leading the Way

Teens often are as self-assured as they are uncertain: one moment they're ready to take on risks without thinking, the next they're critical and cautious. Learning about leadership can help support the important process of figuring out "Who am I?" "What do I care about?" and "How can I contribute?"

This guide and the accompanying teen guide, *Everyday Leadership*, are divided into 21 sessions covering different topics of leadership. Prior to starting the sessions, you may want to have teens complete the Everyday Leadership Skills and Attitudes (ELSA) Inventory, found on pages 161–163 of this guide. This tool is designed for teens to gain self-awareness of their leadership skills. You can conduct it one time to launch your leadership program, or use it as a pre- and post-session tool for students to identify their leadership gains from participating in *Building Everyday Leadership* sessions.

## Coordinating the Sessions with Your Setting

Both this guide and the book for teens are easy to follow and applicable in a range of settings: classrooms, after-school groups, advisory or family groups, service learning and leadership programs, and community- or faith-based programs. Whether you're exploring leadership throughout a school year or unrelated to an academic timeline, such as during a weekend youth group, you have a complete curriculum with *Building Everyday Leadership*.

Each session is designed to take 45 minutes. You can modify the session sequence to fit your needs depending on how often your group meets and participants' maturity and leadership experience. It is worthwhile to conduct the sessions in the order they appear, but should your schedule not allow you to conduct all the sessions,

identify those topics most important to your group. When time allows, build upon what you've already covered by doing additional sessions.

At a minimum, begin with session 1 to set the fundamentals for your leadership teaching effort. And conclude with session 21, however many sessions you conduct, to emphasize the value of a leader's role in acknowledging the contributions of others and to celebrate everyone's participation in this leadership development experience.

You'll find a sample sequence of sessions and a class syllabus at the end of this book (see pages 178–183). If you decide to follow (or modify) these, set up your own specific timeline of dates before beginning the sessions.

Ideally, each participant in your group will have his or her own copy of *Everyday Leadership*, which is meant to be written in and filled out by the participant. Teens might also want to use a folder to store handouts and to add pictures or other mementos from experiences they have throughout the sessions.

Have a couple extra copies of the teen guide on hand in case some teens forget to bring their copies to a session. Alternatively, ask teens to leave their copies where the group meets so they're sure to have them at each session.

The ideal group size for teaching teens leadership can vary depending on participants' ages, maturity, and previous leadership experiences. For high school teens, a group of 16–25 seems to work well. If the group is too small, the variety of perspectives that makes learning about leadership more dynamic may not be as possible. If the group is too large, everyone may not get an opportunity to share their opinions or try out new skills. For middle school students, a group of 12–18 is more optimum, since younger teens generally need more time and attention to express their thoughts and practice skills. If conducting the sessions in a classroom, your

class size may be larger. To engage as many students as possible, you may need to divide the class into smaller groups that will simultaneously participate in an activity or rotate more teens as observers. If your group size is much smaller, decrease the number of teens per group when working in small groups or eliminate observers during role playing.

## Using the Sessions

Many teens have had few opportunities or lack confidence or self-awareness to take on specific leadership roles. This curriculum helps these participants, as well as the more experienced individuals in your group. Teens who have self-confidence and insight into themselves and others will be equally challenged to fine-tune their leadership abilities. Each session in this guide is organized as follows:

- **Goals**—the purpose of the session and what teens are to learn or accomplish
- **Materials Needed**—what you'll need to conduct the session; teens can bring their copies of *Everyday Leadership* to each session or leave them where the group meets so they're sure to have them
- **Getting Ready**—steps to prepare for conducting the session
- **Getting Started**—topic introduction; some sessions include “Find Out More About It” handouts with background information
- **Teach This**—step-by-step guidance through the planned activity, which correlates with “Try This” sections in the teen guide; may include “Instructions for Try This”
- **Talk About It**—discussion questions to use with the group following the activity
- **Think and Write About It**—questions in the teen guide, *Everyday Leadership*, for each participant to think about and respond to following group discussion or the session
- **Do Something About It**—list of ideas at the end of each session in the teen guide to help each participant put their leadership learning into action

Each session in the teen guide includes the following parts:

- **Quotes**—at the beginning of each session, quotes to help teens think further about the leadership

skills they're learning—you may want to solicit teens' reactions to these quotes or encourage them to share their thoughts about them with their peers; a brief introduction to the session topic also is included following the quotes

- **Think and Write About It**—questions for each participant to think about and respond to following group discussion in the session
- **Do Something About It**—the list of ideas at the end of each session to help each participant put her or his leadership learning into action

Some sessions in the teen guide also include:

- **Try This**—material for teens to complete either during or after the session that coordinates with a session activity
- **Find Out More About It**—background information about the session topic to read before or after a session activity

Read through each session completely before conducting it to familiarize yourself with the goals and focus, plan for conducting the activity, and review the background information. This preparation will assist you in anticipating any concerns from participants and in determining a possible emphasis for discussion, according to the needs of your group. Be sure also to consider any specific directions for the reflection writing in “Think and Write About It” and goal setting in “Do Something About It” (see the next section “Choosing a Strategy”).

At the beginning of each session are the corresponding pages for the session in the teen guide. The “Try This,” “Think and Write About It,” and “Do Something About It” pages from the teen book appear in this guide as smaller, readable images with corresponding page numbers as well. “Find Out More About It” background information is in both this guide and the teen book, also with corresponding page references. The information provided in the teen book is often abbreviated in relation to the corresponding information in this guide. It's important to be familiar with both versions so you know what information you may want to fill in during discussions. The “Find Out More About It” sections in this guide are presented as reproducible handouts, which can be photocopied or downloaded (see page viii for how to access digital content) to provide teens more in-depth information. In some sessions, the extended “Find Out

More About It” material in this guide is essential and *must* be made available to teens. In these cases, the handouts are listed under “Materials Needed” to highlight them. At times, you’ll want to direct teens to read “Find Out More About It” background before an activity. In other instances, you’ll find it valuable to hold off on providing more information in order not to influence behavior in the activity.

## Choosing a Strategy

Before beginning any of the sessions, choose a general strategy for when you’d prefer participants to answer the questions in “Think and Write About It” and to select goals in “Do Something About It,” and when you will review their written reflections and goals achieved. Here are a few different possibilities to consider for “Think and Write About It”:

- Allow 10 minutes at the end of each session for teens to do their reflective writing. Before the session ends, scan what they’ve written and initial and date the page to indicate that they’ve completed the assignment and you’ve reviewed it.
- Ask teens to complete their reflective writing outside of the session. At the beginning of the next session, check in to see if participants have any questions or comments to share. Depending on participants’ maturity and rapport with one another, suggest teens take 5 minutes to partner with another person and share their responses. As teens practice leadership skills throughout the sessions, their comfort with sharing their reflective writing with a partner will increase.
- Periodically collect the teen books to review their writing. If possible, schedule brief (10 minutes) individual meetings at least once at some point during a later session in the schedule to talk about what teens have learned through the “Think and Write About It” process. Offer feedback and recognition specific to the teen and his or her achievements in the program. If brief meetings aren’t possible, provide written feedback.
- If time is more limited, assign only one or two of the questions, or have teens select a few themselves. Either way, encourage teens to write on any of the other questions to further explore their leadership thoughts.

In choosing a general strategy, keep in mind that because some “Talk About It” discussions during a session can get quite involved, your group may occasionally want more time to think about the particular material. When that becomes apparent during a session, consider a change in your strategy and wait until participants meet next to assign “Think and Write About It” and “Do Something About It” and wrap up the topic. If your group meets for longer than 45 minutes, however, feel free to expand group discussion.

For “Do Something About It,” consider a similar strategy for reviewing teens’ progress. They can use the checklists on these pages to identify one or two personal goals or as inspiration to make a commitment to do something. The lists offer three to four suggestions and include additional blank lines for teens to add their own ideas. The goal statements are written to echo what teens experienced in the session. Some of the goals can be completed in a day; other actions will take longer. Teens are to indicate a date by which they plan to put their goals into action, the date they completed them, and a description of what they did.

“Do Something About It” sets the stage for teens to incorporate leadership behaviors into both everyday activities and more formal leadership roles they may already be involved in or that they want to take on. Encourage teens to take risks and try new things when engaging in the actions they select. Talk about how people often learn the best lessons doing something unlike anything they’ve done before.

## Setting the Tone

Because you are asking teens to write about (as well as discuss in sessions) topics that inspire self-reflection, it is essential to promote a safe environment that encourages supportive attitudes for and from everyone.

### Confidentiality

Remind teens to talk and write honestly and sincerely in discussions and in their books while still only describing what they are comfortable sharing with others. Maintain an atmosphere within your group that’s respectful of diverse opinions. Instruct group members to honor everyone’s confidentiality. Caution them not to mention other people’s personal information or to use real names when recounting interactions or conflicts, both within and outside of the group.



When conducting the sessions, you may discover that some topics evoke personal admissions and highly charged situations. It's hard to predict exactly when someone may become affected by emotion or when conflict may arise within the group. But if you establish trust early on with the group and monitor any particular dynamics between members, you likely will be able to anticipate potentially difficult circumstances. If intense moments occur, remind teens about maintaining confidentiality and help those disagreeing talk it through.

Maintaining confidentiality is increasingly challenging for digital natives, where thoughts and comments can be distributed with the touch of a text. Remind students that sending information virtually—even if only to one person—violates confidentiality and can lead to larger problems because of the speed with which information moves online and in the cloud.

The same is true with seeing comments made by peers in social media. If teens are ever concerned by what they read in posts made by friends or peers, encourage them to reach out for help on behalf of someone who may be struggling.

### Skills Practice

Some of the session activities depend upon one or more of the teens taking a leadership role or guiding a group discussion. Ask different volunteers to assume these roles throughout the sessions so everyone gets a chance to practice skills. At times, you may want to randomly pick participants' names out of a box or hat. Encourage reluctant teens to give it a try and promote the activity as an opportunity rather than a requirement. However, if you're evaluating teens' learning (see "Evaluating Learning" on page 5), remind them that their participation counts toward part of their assessment or grade. (See also "Goal Setting," which follows.)

As the facilitator, you can help teens practice skills comfortably by providing participants plenty of opportunities to try new skills, looking for what's "right" in what teens are doing, and giving helpful, positive feedback. Take some time to think about your own definitions, expectations, biases, and personal behaviors related to leadership before you begin any of the sessions. Whatever your facilitation style, when you make the sessions come alive for the teens in your group, they more likely will feel your energy and why you want them to take the lead. And demonstrating leadership will better enable you to *let* teens take the lead.

### Goal Setting

Some teens initially may be uncomfortable taking the risks necessary to lead or participate fully in session activities. This can be stressful for those who haven't had much experience taking the lead or participating in group activities (such as team-building exercises). Your sensitivity to their perspective is essential.

One helpful approach to facilitating learning is "Challenge by Choice" (CbC), endorsed by Project Adventure, a nonprofit education and training organization known for its innovative experiential education approach and ropes challenge courses (see "Resources and Additional Reading" on page 212). CbC promotes individuals taking responsibility to participate in an activity. Specifically, a person learns to set a goal that offers enough of a challenge to improve skills and contribute to the group rather than one that is too easy or too difficult or contributes nothing. For example, a shy or reserved group member is willing to take on a speaking role in an activity but is not quite ready to lead the activity.

### Role Playing

Another helpful approach is role playing, which some of the session activities use. Role playing provides participants a fun opportunity to experience different perspectives in small or large groups. They assume the roles of certain characters to act out in various scenarios. Review the roles with participants before starting an activity and remind them to stay in character throughout the role play.

When teens practice different leadership and group roles, the learning takes on a real-life aspect making it easier to apply particular strategies when actual situations arise. Much of the role playing in the sessions is scripted to support an expected outcome. Even so, the role playing allows participants to connect personally to the topic. Role playing is most meaningful when participants and observers also discuss their reactions to the role play afterwards and its application to real life.

Be sure to address with teens some basic ground rules for role playing. As with "Talk About It" and "Think and Write About It," remind participants that they do not have to reveal personal information in role playing. If teens start to act overly silly or lose focus, stop the role playing and remind them of its purpose.

As participants develop self-confidence and comfort in practicing and developing leadership skills, increasingly promote their involvement within the group.



Because the activities in this book are designed to be engaging and appealing, they tend to draw teens in from the beginning. But even if at first some choose to participate minimally, it isn't long before they feel they are missing out by not joining in.

## Evaluating Learning

Whatever setting in which you teach teens leadership, you may be asked or choose to measure teens' growth.

### Core Leadership Competencies

Although there are no recognized or agreed-upon national content standards for teaching leadership in the United States and Canada, standards are being developed and established at the state and provincial levels. Teens participating in all 21 sessions in the *Building Everyday Leadership* curriculum guide can expect to acquire and enhance 12 core leadership competencies (listing follows). These leadership competencies align closely with developing and established content standards for leadership, service learning, or workplace preparation in the states of Arizona, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia (see "Resources and Additional Reading" on pages 207–208).

- Develop a personal definition of what it means to be a leader and identify opportunities to demonstrate leadership in everyday situations.
- Discern the variety of ways people lead and how to promote others' leadership potential.
- Understand the role and use of a leader's power, influence, and authority.
- Make well-considered ethical decisions confidently, even when facing negative peer pressure.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to attitudes, issues, and responsibilities of leaders related to a diverse society, including confronting prejudice and stereotypes and creating an inclusive team atmosphere.
- Accept responsibility willingly, follow through on projects, balance commitments, and support others in doing the right thing and standing up for their beliefs.
- Work with others on a team and recognize the differences individuals bring when becoming part of a team.
- Identify productive approaches to conflict resolution and problem solving.

- Identify personal motivators and ways to motivate others, as well as recognize the importance of establishing a team vision and goals.
- Identify appropriate role models and demonstrate effective leadership for others.
- Accept and learn from mistakes respectfully and celebrate team successes appropriately.
- Act confidently as a leader and be recognized for leadership actions that demonstrate a capability to make an ongoing difference, whether big or small, as an everyday leader.

If there are no established content standards for leadership classes in your area, first identify the learning outcomes within other subjects or classes, such as social studies, language arts, family and consumer science, service learning, or other relevant content areas. Then you can connect the leadership core competencies for this curriculum to these other areas.

Even with increased requirements to meet standardized testing goals in other academic subjects (such as those listed previously), you can easily incorporate leadership development into these classes and in doing so support and enhance core subject matter. For example, writing prompts in language arts courses can involve leadership topics and a typical civics lesson in social studies can include a discussion on how decisions are made in various community settings.

## The Everyday Leadership Skills & Attitudes (ELSA) Inventory

The Everyday Leadership Skills & Attitude Inventory (see page 159) was developed specifically with young people in mind. Rather than adapt an inventory designed for adults or college-age students to measure leadership awareness and growth, this inventory evaluates leadership concepts from younger perspectives. As anyone working with kids recognizes, tweens and teens have distinct expectations and constructs in which they measure leaders and leadership.

It doesn't matter if they are applying these frameworks to themselves or others. In general, when given opportunities to test and try out leadership behaviors, most teens will use similar language and examples to describe what they've learned and how their leadership skills can (or will) be applied. And granted, some kids are better than others at identifying leadership talents, let alone doing something with this awareness.

Prior to having the teens with whom you're working complete the ELSA Inventory, identify your goals for utilizing the inventory. This can help you select additional activities, enrichments, connections, or projects to infuse leadership development. As with any leadership inventory, you may find various ways for using this tool. Suggestions for use include:

- As a pre- or post-assessment tool with a leadership experience to measure changes in attitudes and skill development
- As a goal-setting tool within a youth leadership experience to identify strengths and challenge areas and establish leadership goals with those areas in mind
- As a personal-awareness tool to help teens gain a greater understanding of their leadership abilities, whether or not they do more with that information
- As a team-awareness tool to help teens assess the skills and talents—as well as shortcomings—of their team or group and set goals to enrich how the team works together
- As part of a leadership curriculum where you can collect data to determine the effectiveness of your leadership education and development efforts

No two leadership programs are alike. Yet, as with adults, leadership skills and attitudes in young people run along similar paths, regardless of the experiences in which teens are involved. While the inventory aligns directly with the *Building Everyday Leadership* curriculum, field tests with a wide-range of leadership programs and courses involving teens and tweens indicate its validity with youth leaders regardless of the program.

The ELSA Inventory, step-by-step instructions for administering it, and supporting materials related to using the Inventory begin on page 159. The ELSA supporting materials are designed to enrich how you and the teens completing the inventory can use the results. The data sheet (page 166) can be used by you or your organization to keep track of the demographics of teens completing the ELSA.

## Measuring Leadership Learning

The ELSA Inventory can be used to measure leadership learning by asking teens to complete it before participating in leadership training and again at the end of the training experience. To measure learning, keep students' first completed ELSA Inventories and compare

them to the results of the inventory after students have completed your program, allowing students to review and reflect on personal changes.

### Determining Reasonable Outcomes

It's valuable to establish expectations of teens and tweens to demonstrate leadership competence at the outset of any leadership training. The following list identifies examples of leadership behaviors that are reasonable to expect of teens and tweens. The level of competence will depend upon age, preparation, and opportunities provided in leadership engagement.

#### Teens and tweens can:

- Design and manage their own projects from start to finish. They may benefit from having support from adults in the form of setting format, clarifying timelines, and identifying specific boundaries.
- Set master outlines and conduct project follow-through.
- Delegate group responsibilities for various activities.
- Be expected to appropriately confront others about inappropriate behaviors; having these behaviors modeled consistently by adult mentors is important, as are opportunities to learn and practice this skill in a safe setting.
- Demonstrate right from wrong behavior as a student leader.
- Stand up for themselves against peer pressure.
- Stand up for individual beliefs among peers and adult mentors.
- Organize meetings, planning events, committees, etc.
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior at mixed (adult and youth) events.
- Develop public speaking skills.
- Develop anger management and conflict resolution skills.
- Mediate conflicts among peers.
- Demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance with diverse populations.
- Differentiate between fact and opinion.
- Establish and model reasonable standards of responsibility among peers.
- Fairly select members or leaders for projects, committees, organizations.

- Set and manage budgets for youth activities and projects.
- Design public relations campaigns and other appropriate promotion activities.
- Solicit donations and coordinate fundraising efforts.
- Conduct group problem solving.
- Prepare and present to key stakeholders.
- Interview and assist with staff (program, teaching, board, etc.) selection.
- Develop, review, evaluate, modify, and monitor policies that directly affect youth.
- Facilitate group activities, lead discussion, guide debriefing, and apply what is learned through leadership activities.

To determine if your expectations are reasonable, build time into the project, activity, or program process to ask teens:

- What do you want to learn to become a better leader?
- In what situations is it difficult to be a leader?
- How can you get others to see you as a leader, especially if you have never been looked at like that before?
- What can I do to help you become a better leader?
- What can other teachers, staff, or mentors do to help you?
- How can we work together as a school or an organization to show everyone that leading and leadership are “cool”?
- How do you think adults in our school or organization could be more sensitive to your leadership talents and contributions?
- What is your perspective on this issue, topic, or policy? How does this affect your motivation for this project?

After completing a project or presentation, consider these reflection questions:

- Did you feel prepared to conduct that project?
- In what ways could you have been better prepared?
- Do you feel that this project allowed all teens in our program the chance to become leaders and showcase their abilities?
- If people didn’t follow through with their responsibilities, what do you suggest we do?

“The Leadership Project Group- and Self-Evaluation” handout (part of the bonus materials in the bonus digital content—see page viii for how to access) is a useful way for teens to give and receive leadership feedback. After completing a group project or program, give teens the opportunity to complete a handout for themselves as well as one for each member of their team. Use this information as you wish such as establishing grades or for one-on-one feedback to improve teen leadership skills.

Similar to “360 Degree” feedback used in the workforce, this form is most effective when members of the group are asked to fill out individual evaluation forms for each group member as well as one for themselves. Remind teens that their forms will be kept confidential, even though they are asked to sign their name to the form, to get greater honesty. Allowing teens to submit the forms anonymously is an option; however, it can result in flippant complaints about peers rather than valuable critiques about individual contributions.

### **Measuring School-Based Teen Leadership Learning Outcomes**

Additional ways to measure outcomes for the *Building Everyday Leadership* curriculum is to consider having teens research a leader, observe an organization and present a report to the group, or complete a midterm or final exam. (You will find guidelines for a research report and the observing-an-organization project as well as a midterm exam and a final exam covering the content in the 21 sessions for *Building Everyday Leadership* in the back of this book. See “Supplemental Materials” beginning on page 177.) If grading is necessary, here is a suggested breakdown for distributing points toward grading that you can modify for your own needs:

- Participating in sessions  
10 points each session
- Reflective writing  
15–25 points each
- Achieving personal goals  
15–25 points each completed goal
- Researching-a-leader project  
125 points
- Observing-an-organization project  
50 points
- Completing exams (midterm and final)  
100 points each

The total possible points participants can earn will depend upon how many sessions you conduct and the number of other requirements you establish for your group.

### **Alternative Methods for Measuring Teen Leadership Learning Outcomes**

The process of “learning leadership” may pose challenges for individuals who seek only statistical measurements of how a teen’s leadership abilities have improved. Teaching teens the value of creative thinking enables educators and instructors to model how creative thinking can provide methods for measuring learning. Here is a list of field-collected ideas that go beyond paper-and-pencil testing to understand the leadership gains made by teens:

#### **Artwork/Drawing**

Leadership topics can be understood in the form of a drawing or photograph. Give teens opportunities to express themselves through art. Provide them with a large piece of paper, propose a leadership topic or issue, and have them express what it means to them. Create a gallery for the projects to be shown. Build in time for discussion and interpretation.

#### **Community Projects**

Teens can demonstrate the results of work they have done in the community by collecting feedback from the program served, writing an essay about their personal experience, or getting a letter of recommendation from a program staff member. Or they can create a leadership project that will have a direct, positive, and measurable impact on their community and interview individuals affected by their efforts. Consider projects that are social, ecological, or done with a business.

#### **Create a Story Board**

Many teens, especially boys, like graphic novels. Start with a sequence of roughly drawn pictures that capture key moments in their leadership journey. Put them up on a wall to create and trace the history of the project or the issue. This can be powerful with leadership issues such as ethical dilemmas, leadership project design, social issues facing teens, and communication topics.

#### **Create a Wall-Size Mural**

Have teens paint a mural, which can be a vivid representation of leadership. Endless topics can be expressed and promoted in a mural. Discuss the “leadership” differences between creating a mural and graffiti or tagging, such as knowing the property owner, having permission

to create the mural, coordinating location with law enforcement so the end result contributes positively to the community, including signage on the mural indicating who did it and who sponsored it, and so on.

#### **Debates**

A significant value of debates is in preparing for the actual debate! Create a specific rubric or other criteria for assessment so teens know what you’ll be watching for. Watching a professional debate between leaders (such as a political debate) is a powerful discussion and learning tool as well.

#### **Game Design**

Ask teens to take any game, such as Simon Says, Monopoly, Scrabble, Jeopardy, Trivial Pursuit, Wheel of Fortune, Concentration, card games, or ball games, and redesign it so it relates to leadership. For example, Scrabble can be played as instructed with the parameters that every word used must relate to leadership (see Leadership Word Play in the digital content for a “human-sized” version). Certain versions of Trivial Pursuit are excellent for discussing and learning about leadership-related topics (or people). Some games played as instructed allow leadership behaviors to emerge naturally (such as Risk). Even video games played in a group setting lend themselves to leadership discussions.

#### **Interviews**

Leadership learning can be assessed if teens are given time to talk freely about it. Casual, stress-free discussion or interview time is rarely used, and yet can be of great benefit. If teens can’t interview real people, have them formulate questions and extrapolate hypothetical answers. Even more powerful is when teens can interview existing leaders and interpret and present the results of that interview.

#### **Leadership Inventories**

Facilitate the ELSA Inventory with teens as an additional way to measure leadership learning. Have them set goals based on the inventory and strive to strengthen skills based on the self-assessment that comes from the inventory results.

#### **Leadership Letter**

Just as teen athletes earn varsity letters for athletic participation and accomplishments, create standards and guidelines for teens to earn similar letters for their leadership participation and accomplishments. Invite teens to create the guidelines or consider the guidelines found in the digital content.



### Leadership Portfolio

Have teens produce a portfolio (notebook, video, other medium) that demonstrates any leadership building activities or programs in which they've been involved. A useful approach can be found by looking at the Wisconsin Youth Leadership Skills Standards Certificate program, most notably, the "transcript" found at [cte.dpi.wi.gov/cte\\_ylssindex](http://cte.dpi.wi.gov/cte_ylssindex) (see page 208).

### Journals and Learning Logs

For teens who are private and introspective, use personal written reflection to learn about what they know. Through journaling, the content becomes specific and teens can create or answer questions about what and how they learned. They can also add their own feelings and possible leadership applications of their experiences.

### Montage or Collage

This format is a way to collect and put together thoughts and ideas. Have teens explore traditional collages (using magazine clippings, photographs, scrapbooking supplies, etc.) or create PowerPoint presentations or design a Web page. The more choice and freedom you give teens, the more likely you'll get something really innovative.

### Multimedia

Teens can make a video, audio recording, podcast, or website related to leadership. Insist that it be quality and provide access to the necessary resources. Have teens organize into small teams, pick topics from a hat (or have the large group work together to self-select topics), and let teens create and post a video to YouTube. Encourage teens to create leadership public service announcements (PSA) for a local TV station. Create a little friendly competition based on votes for best leadership video (increase exposure even further by having teens create Facebook fan sites to draw more votes).

### Music

Most leadership materials and issues can be written about, set to music, or performed as music. Lyrics of existing songs can also be used to help teens understand how they learn leadership, including evaluating songs for negative or positive leadership influences. Or have teens rewrite an existing song to emphasize leadership issues.

### Newspaper Articles

Let teens create a mock-up front page on a leadership topic. They can take different points of view. Have each teen relate their "column" to their own life. That way the

front page will cover leadership from personal, financial, sociological, historical, literary, mathematical, physical, or scientific perspectives.

### Performance

Have teens create a movie or theatrical script with a leadership theme. Point out existing plays (such as *West Side Story*, *Wicked*, or *Rent*) that have leadership themes intertwined with the main plot. Some leadership topics lend themselves to being performed (such as social issues, controversial topics, and role modeling). Allow time for teens to do a quality job preparing or writing their script. Then create a fun stage for them to perform upon.

### Plan and Produce a Mini-Conference

Teens plan a mini-conference on leadership. They gather speakers, plan the talks and workshops, organize the logistics, put it on, and evaluate it. This assessment requires tremendous teamwork and time, but it is well worth the effort.

### Sculpture

Let students represent their learning through artistic models. In addition, existing sculptures or objects can be used to prompt teens to discuss the issues surrounding the piece or what leadership issues arise by looking at the design.

### Student Teaching

Provide teens time to create a lesson on leadership. Encourage them to use the leadership skills they've learned. Educate teens on the basics of different learning styles prior to teaching a lesson so they know how to make the lesson interactive and engaging. Keep the experience fun by letting students choose their leadership topic and promoting peer support. Give each teen (or team of teens) time to teach their topic to the class.

### Surveys

Have teens design and administer surveys to peers, adults, and any other stakeholders. Encourage teens to use any formats such as box-checking and short essay or answer. Ask questions such as "how did you feel about leadership when we first started?" Move through progressive questions to find out if the learners have changed their feelings about leadership as well as asking questions specific to leadership skills and abilities they have learned and developed.

### Teen Written Tests

Let teens figure out what's important and what's not. Ask them to create their own test—you can set some basic criteria and still leave plenty of room for creativity.

### Webs or Mind-Mapping

Let teens create huge, poster-sized maps of what they know about leadership or leadership topics. Thematic webs and graphic organizers offer tangential and inter-connected thoughts about a main idea. Mapping is a great way for teens to show they understand relationships, themes, and associations of leadership ideas.

Before beginning the sessions, determine what methods, if any, you will use to measure participant learning (for example, will you require a project to observe an organization, exams?) and set grading standards. If using the ELSA (page 159), build time into your session schedule to allow for conducting and interpreting the inventory. Suggestions for when to plan exams, project presentations, and research papers are included in the sample sequence of sessions (see pages 178–182). If you are using an evaluation or pre- and post-assessment, review the one you have selected to determine when teens might complete it.

## Additional Information on Youth Leadership

*Youth leadership* is a growing interest area in the field of leadership development, with programs being developed in schools and communities worldwide. This is exciting because for many years, leadership training has been associated with business or management. Much of the existing research and anecdotal observations apply to the business world or other corporate environments.

But while adult leadership programs can provide a starting point for developing effective teen leadership programs, teen leaders prefer age-relevant instruction rather than that geared toward adults.

A wide range of leadership opportunities exist for kids and teens. Even so, young leaders often are not provided enough training to succeed in their leadership roles. Student leaders, particularly in middle school and high school, are put into positions of leadership through popular vote, teacher and staff selection, or parental urging. Frequently, students in leadership roles have little in-depth understanding of the significance of their role or the personal development that can come with the experience.

Many of my interviews with teen leaders indicate that their experiences would be more meaningful if someone took the time to explore what being a leader meant to them and how they could get the most from

a particular leadership position. In addition, teen leaders express that not everyone is interested in being in student council, yet often, those students are the only ones given opportunities to take leadership classes or participate in leadership workshops or trainings.

Too frequently, youth leadership education lacks consistent and deliberate connection between the leadership experience and the application of these skills to the real world. Because of this, some teen leadership experiences remain stagnant or superficial rather than truly promoting youth empowerment and leadership ability. Many teens begin to perceive their leadership experiences—athletics, student government, youth group, clubs, school participation, class involvement, or volunteering—as “fun and games” without meaningful connection to daily life and lifelong goals. In cases where leadership is part of a “turn around” program (diversions, intervention, etc.), teens may even participate because they feel they *have* to, rather than doing so to enhance personal development.

At the college level, the sophisticated integration of leadership development has increased tremendously since the late 20th century. The advent of organized leadership programs means there’s no excuse for college-bound students not to be sufficiently prepared to take on the responsibilities of leadership. For secondary students who don’t intend to attend college, the need for sufficient preparation at the middle and high school level is even greater. As teens enter adulthood, they will find themselves working with an increasingly diverse and complex workforce. When competing with college-educated peers who have participated in leadership experiences, a lack of these skills will be obvious. Employers will be looking at how capable each person is at being a leader within their own field and with colleagues.

It’s disappointing that comprehensive teen leadership education is rarely included in most curricula. And although many activities of adolescence contribute to positive leadership development, these activities repeatedly occur without concentrating efforts on discussion, reflection, application, and mastery. For example, teens elected to lead their student council may recognize the power of their new position without recognizing how capable or prepared they are to carry out the responsibilities of that position. The same is true of teens who are involved in volunteer efforts yet are unprepared to interact with community citizens or the populations they’re excited to serve. Unfortunately, advisors lack the time necessary to conduct appropriate leadership training

so teen leaders are prepared. Yet, teen leaders are still expected to demonstrate consistent and balanced leadership abilities.

Recognizing that teens benefit from assistance identifying, developing, and fine-tuning leadership skills is a key step. Recognizing that youth leadership is different from adult theories of development is also an important step (see the Josephine A. van Linden and Carl I. Fertman book *Youth Leadership* for research support). The challenge is how to dedicate time and energy to developing leadership skills and sensitivities in teens.

It's important to recognize the pivotal role all adults (educators, youth workers, camp directors, youth ministers, mentors, etc.) play in helping every teen develop leadership abilities to this potential.

Rather than viewing leadership ability as something one either has or doesn't have, and employing this attitude with all teens, it is more effective to embrace the idea that every teen has the potential to be a leader. This perspective is effective because it:

- is action oriented
- is present tense (“here and now”)
- is personal and individualistic
- is reinforced when teens work with others
- promotes locus of control skills
- promotes self-esteem and confidence
- combines thought, action, feelings, and physiological responses
- recognizes that there are various definitions of leadership yet common terms that apply to leaders and leadership
- recognizes that leadership is a collection of skills and behaviors that can be taught, practiced, and improved upon
- prepares teens for their future

Read on to understand teen perspectives on leadership, what's missing for teen leaders, and ways to serve as an exceptional leadership educator and role model for all teens you encounter.

### **Understanding the Teen Leadership Frame of Reference**

- Teens tend to embrace a “philosophical” (what does leadership mean in my life; how do I feel about being a leader) approach to leadership. They develop individual and personal beliefs about leaders and

leadership instead of trying to fit into predefined leadership categories.

- Teens have similar experiences as their peers and can apply these experiences to their daily life. What they do in school and in the community are closely linked and may involve interacting with the same people in all settings. Organized leadership development efforts are particularly effective because of this interconnectedness.
- Many teens realize, but may not accept, their strengths and challenges as leaders. They may bend to social pressure to act “cool” even if their internal compasses struggle to guide them differently.
- Teens are savvy in identifying acceptable and appropriate standards for socially recognized leaders. They have difficulty identifying heroes as compared to earlier generations because of the rise in “famous” yet unnoteworthy individuals in society.
- Teens expect a lot from peers who are elected or selected into leadership roles. In situations where selection standards are ill-defined or minimal, poorly prepared teen leaders may find themselves in positions that result in peer and/or adult dissatisfaction.
- Teens have greater opportunities than in the past to take on increasingly responsible leadership roles in school or the community. Even though teen opinions are sought by adult leadership (for example, by community agency boards, mayors, senators, city councils, school boards, etc.), opportunities for teens to impact decisions directly affecting youth “quality of life” in the community are still limited.
- Teens have grown up being taught to accept diversity and tolerance and to have a multicultural attitude when serving as leaders.
- Teens tend to embrace leaders who are team-oriented, a style that works well for teens who have grown up believing in teamwork and inclusivity. This is not all positive, however, because some teens have difficulty taking the lead when others won't.
- Teens are provided opportunities to take on leadership roles to assist peers in developing personal power and control in daily conflicts. More mediation and intervention programs rely on the power of teen involvement—from telling their story to serving as formal role models.
- Teens are increasingly encouraged to seek out (or are set up with) mentors within their school or

community. Research continues to indicate the beneficial role mentors play in the lives of kids and teens.

- Teens value the importance of building relationships and showing care for others.
- Like adults, teens struggle with the stereotype that leaders are popular and attractive, and that only good kids are good leaders. At-risk teens more often than not believe that to be a leader there must be something special about you.
- Teen leaders grapple with how to deal with peers who want them to confront authority, change the system, or otherwise counteract status-quo and may accuse them of “selling out” when they agree with adult-driven leadership decisions.

### **Making Teen Leadership Preparation More Meaningful**

Preparing teens to lead takes dedication and deliberate attention. Consider using the following guidelines as a foundation for making teen leadership opportunities meaningful, and in turn, more sustainable:

- Provide opportunities for teens to make mistakes without having these mistakes held against them.
- Help teens identify appropriate contemporary social role models, even if these role models seem few and far between.
- Value teens for who they are now rather than wanting them to “grow up.”
- Establish consistent, reasonable leadership standards that parents, teachers, and other close adults can expect from teens.
- Provide real leadership experiences that apply to daily life and the future.
- Recognize that real life experiences (positive and negative) often shape the leadership attitudes of tweens and teens, and adapt leadership training to transform these attitudes if necessary.
- Look for ways to provide at-risk teens with leadership roles, so negative social influences won't take precedence (for example, gangs, negative peer-pressure, adult acquaintances, drug culture, etc.).
- Acknowledge and embrace the diversity and cultural differences of modern teens.
- Connect teens with adult mentors who are comfortable allowing them to take on significant responsibilities and leadership roles.

- Encourage teens to envision the difference and power one person can make.
- Provide consistent, frequent opportunities to take on leadership roles within the communities or organizations most influential to teens (schools, youth groups, community centers, etc.).
- Be willing to learn from spontaneous classroom or group discussions rather than restraining teen energy through over-programmed, sterile, or climate-controlled situations.

### **Tips for Developing Your Skills as a Leadership Educator**

Kids and teens want to see that you're as serious as they are about being a leader. Here are ideas for infusing a leadership attitude into your classroom or program:

- Use leadership language in everyday conversation with teens (remark when you notice how they take charge, make a difference, believe in themselves, make good decisions, serve as role models, etc.).
- Acknowledge and recognize teens who make good leadership decisions in their mental health, peer activities, and other involvements.
- Use leadership development activities as sessions for groups.
- Use debriefing and reflection that relate the experience to the issues of the group as well as to what they can do in their daily lives.
- Dedicate specific sessions to developing leadership.
- Depending upon the subject matter of individual sessions, incorporate leadership skills development as part of group action plans or homework.
- Develop a leadership library from which teens can check out books or videos. A brief selection of books and movies are included on pages 215–218 of this book. Also, visit [mariammacgregor.com](http://mariammacgregor.com) for additional resources.
- Show movies with leadership themes, discuss them, and apply them to the issues at hand.
- Offer an organized, ongoing leadership development class. Have this class provide consistent experiences for every student who completes it. As time goes on, the culture of your program will begin to reflect the ideals you develop in the class, regardless of when teens participate in the class.



- Communicate the importance for leaders to recognize and value diversity. Create activities that assist in developing these skills and sensitivities.
- Create or enhance peer mediation training.
- Create teen review boards or decision-making committees to help with organizational decisions and meet regularly.
- Develop a schedule for teens to introduce current events for leadership discussion.

Here are ideas for personal and professional development to enhance one's skill as a leadership educator:

- Read about leadership theories, attitudes, and trends.
- Talk with teen leaders around your school and community.
- Observe teen leaders in action.
- Teach a leadership class: like teens, adults learn best through hands-on experience.
- Participate in a ropes course.
- Take a training class to learn how to facilitate a ropes course.
- Attend a lecture or presentation given by a business leader or other individual who is recognized for leadership skills and use what you learn when working with teens.
- Volunteer in the community—service experiences are excellent ways to develop leadership skills.
- Develop an evaluation form of your skills that teens can complete and give back to you. (Allow for anonymity—you get better feedback.)
- Participate in the school improvement process; volunteer to chair a committee or lead some other group process.
- When reading (books, newspapers, blogs, Web content, etc.), read with an eye for the leadership issues being addressed (such as ethics, creative thinking, problem solving, communication, appropriate conflict resolution, etc.).
- Co-plan and/or co-teach with a teen leader a class session on a leadership topic. Take time after the experience to discuss successes and challenges.
- Attend professional development trainings on leadership topics.
- Co-teach with teachers in various academic disciplines a class session on leadership or a lengthier leadership class.
- Coach a teen athletic team.
- Sponsor a school club or other youth activity.
- Serve as detention monitor one day, but instead of the usual detention schedule, design and conduct relevant leadership lessons (for example, on how to stay out of detention)—leadership lessons *do* apply to truancy and misbehavior.
- Find a mentor who can help you strengthen your skills as a leadership educator.
- Enroll in a course on organizational behavior, leadership styles, communication, or something similar (check local colleges and universities—this coursework often counts toward continuing education for professional licenses/credentials).
- Watch and discuss movies that relate to leadership (many movies do!).
- Practice, practice, practice.

Here are tips for building a culture of leadership into classrooms or program space:

- Partner with teens to establish a definition of “leadership” and “leader” and post them in a prominent place for all to see.
- Identify the leadership characteristics you desire teens in your program to possess, and create opportunities to learn them. Examples include:
  - volunteering at a shelter (empathy and tolerance)
  - participating in a community forum (community leadership)
  - registering to vote and understanding the voting process (political leadership)
  - attending a cultural event of a culture different from your own (tolerance and diversity)
  - practicing ethical decisions (ethics, values, and decision making)
- Seek teen perspectives when shaping policies and programs.
- When teens in your program or school make a mistake, allow time to discuss what they learned from the experience and how they can use what they learned. In other words, allow for mistakes, process through them, and apply the learning.

- Explore ways that teens can learn new things and apply what they have learned. As with most things, learning leadership takes practice. Talk about experiences along the way.
- Make “leadership” and “becoming a leader” part of daily conversation, program activities, school, and family activities.
- Include youth leadership tips and youth leadership recognitions in your newsletter or at your website.
- Relate leadership to all activities.
- Identify what is important to the young people in your program and find ways to create leadership opportunities around those topics and issues.
- Learn and practice appropriate conflict resolution with youth.
- Consistently recognize leadership accomplishments for all teens, all situations.
- Be attentive to “teachable leadership moments.”
- Listen and be patient . . . developing leaders is an ongoing process.
- Be supportive and encouraging.
- Model what you expect, and let teens lead.

### **Leadership Education for Digital Natives**

Today’s teens are the first of many generations who will grow up in a technologically driven world. A few years ago, cell phones were designed for basic text and talk interactions, and other mobile devices were limited in the classroom. Now, students learn in wired environments, complete assignments individually or in groups using various Internet platforms, and are expected to BYOD (bring your own device) to some classes.

It’s an exciting and challenging endeavor to prepare kids and teens that are highly connected to one another (and their learning) via the cloud to be leaders in real life. While technology can enrich most academic learning environments, when it comes to this type of experiential learning, technology can distract or distance kids from hands-on, interactive leadership lessons.

Participating in sessions from *Building Everyday Leadership* is a bit like attending summer camp where, unless you’re at technology camp, campers are asked to leave their devices behind in order to fully participate in group activities. By facilitating lessons where students take on various leadership roles or actively participate from beginning to end, teens learn critical relationship skills needed by good leaders. Curtailing

technology use during interactive leadership lessons minimizes the busy “split-brain” approach to life that is becoming normalized for kids and teens. In many ways, good leadership education relies on old-school techniques—building face-to-face relationships, teaching and practicing conflict resolution in real life, laughing together, problem solving through tough situations, and strengthening critical thinking skills instead of allowing wishy-washy multiple-choice decision making.

Adult facilitators also excel when modeling high-touch teaching by putting away their own devices during discussions and processing. Teens learn how to give their full attention when they receive our full attention.

But . . . when it comes to enriching and extending the learning, technology is an excellent and relevant tool! Recording videos, snapping and artistically editing photos, creating funny viral memes, using modern resources to measure authentic learning, interacting in real time on multiple social platforms (which change rapidly), and creating connected youth communities on these same platforms is worthwhile and relevant.

It bears repeating: everyone can learn to lead. But truly learning to be a leader requires more than a Google search to identify the best ingredients. It requires practice and “being present in the present.” Young people who look others in the eye, offer a hand for a hand shake, and speak clearly and confidently stand out in a crowd full of teens with eyes glued to a device, thumbs tapping away, and responding with mumbled, distracted, fragmented comments in conversation.

### **Inspiring the Way**

Teen leaders are not just the leaders of the future; they are our leaders of today. As an educator or youth worker using this curriculum guide, aim to actively seek out teens’ insights and contributions in school, in businesses, in the community, and in families. If you can motivate teens with high expectations and an attitude that lets them know you believe in them, they rarely will set their personal standards any lower.

Leading with your own heart is what teaching teens about leadership and being a leader is all about. With this guide, you’ll discover many ways to personally inspire teens to embrace leadership and take the lead. But no matter how well you know the subject matter, the true inspiration comes from within you. Your passion for working with teens and nurturing their potential for leading will only increase as you embrace and experience their passions. And imagine what that can mean for all the leaders to come!



# INTRODUCING LEADERSHIP

( PAGES 5-8 IN *EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP* )

## GOALS

Participants will:

- consider their own potential for leadership
- gain insight into the value of leadership in everyday activities
- introduce themselves to the group
- review program or class expectations and goals

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Everyday Leadership*, one book for each participant
- Class sequence and syllabus (optional)
- *Everyday Leadership Skills & Attitude (ELSA) Inventory*, one for each participant (optional)
- 8½" x 11" colored paper
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons

## GETTING READY

Make copies of the "Class Sequence" and "Class Syllabus" on pages 181-182 and 183 and if necessary, modify for your specific use.

## Getting Started

Gaining an understanding of why leadership is important in everyday ways, big and small, is key to teens developing their own leadership ability. This session provides an entertaining way for teens to consider their potential as leaders. It also enables teens to introduce themselves to one another if they don't already know each other.

Welcome everyone to the group. During the first 10 minutes, acknowledge the specific reasons teens are learning about leadership. Briefly express your reasons for teaching leadership. Then explain why leadership is important. You might say:

**How often do you find yourself complaining or disappointed about things you wish you could change? Do you ever feel frustrated about not knowing how to make a change happen? Or wish you felt more**

**confident to speak up and say something? By learning and building the skills to step forward and stand up for your beliefs, or to follow through on your dreams, you can put yourself in a better position to make your voice heard. In other words, learning how to take the lead can help you achieve what you want.**

Leading doesn't mean you have to do something big, such as be president of a group or a famous individual who campaigns for political causes. And it isn't something just a few people in recognized positions of authority do either. There are lots of smaller, more modest ways to take the lead every day, such as routinely doing volunteer work or welcoming a new kid at school into your group of friends.

Learning to lead enables you to learn about yourself and try new skills. It's about putting into action who you are and what you care about to make a positive difference for yourself and the world around you.

Pass out copies of *Everyday Leadership*. Highlight the ways this book will be a "work in progress" for teens. You might say:

**After the group sessions and our discussions, you will be thinking and writing in your book on the topics we learned about. By doing so, you will be creating a collection of your thoughts and ideas on leadership. Hopefully, this book will become your personal guide and resource to refer to throughout any leadership experiences.**

Ask teens to read the "Introduction" on pages 1–4 of their books, and allow them a few minutes to flip through the pages. Then, for the next 10 minutes or so, cover the following steps, excluding any that are not relevant to your setting:

**1** Hand out the syllabus and the sequence of sessions. Ask teens to look over them, and briefly point out any required projects, papers, and exams. Tell teens you will address details about these requirements during future sessions.

**2** Distribute copies of the Everyday Leadership Skills & Attitude (ELSA) Inventory (page 159), and instruct teens on completing it. If there's time, ask them to do it during the session or instruct them to complete it later and return it by the next session.

**3** Explain that in addition to doing one or more activities and having a group discussion during a session, they'll be using their books both in and outside of the sessions. Go through the general format of *Everyday Leadership* and point out each of the sections and how they relate to what takes place in each session. You might say:

- "Quotes" pages help trigger your thinking about the leadership topic for each session. You may want to share the quotes and your reactions to them with friends and family and ask what they think. Keep the quotes in mind throughout the activities we'll be doing.
- "Try This" pages you may do individually or in a small group during the session.
- "Find Out More About It" pages provide background reading. Sometimes you'll read this information before an activity. Other times, you'll read the information afterward so it doesn't influence how you act or what happens during the activity.
- "Think and Write About It" pages include questions to think about and respond to individually after our group discussion.
- "Do Something About It" pages give you ideas or actions to "do something" with what you are learning about being a leader. Each time, you'll select one or two of these ideas to set as personal goals to achieve. If you have an idea or two of your own that you prefer, there's also space to add these to the list.

**4** Explain how you will review their writing to provide feedback (or if grading is necessary) based on the strategies you've selected. For example, you might say:

**Time allowing, you'll get 5 to 10 minutes to write at the end of each session. If we do not have enough time, you'll need to complete your responses to the required reflective writing questions in the "Think and Write About It" section by the next session. Feel free to answer any additional questions on your own to further explore leadership.**

**Sometimes, we'll share responses with the group or a partner to learn from each other. Please respond honestly to the questions in your books, keeping in mind that what you write may be read by or discussed with another person. If you have written something you'd prefer just me to read, let me know and we can meet individually.**

5 Encourage teens to be creative with their books. They can use the book or a separate folder to store handouts, notes, pictures, or other mementos from leadership experiences they have throughout the sessions or later.

Allow a few minutes for questions. To summarize, you might say:

**Make the book your own. Having fun with it and being creative is part of this leadership learning experience. Think about what leadership means for you, why you are here, and what kind of a leader you want to be.**

### TEACH THIS

## At the Newsstand

In this warm-up activity, teens will draw fictitious magazine covers featuring themselves. This activity helps teens consider their potential for being leaders. Some of the covers might be funny, others more serious.

Distribute the colored paper and markers (or colored pencils, crayons) to each person. Ask everyone to focus on her or his piece of paper while you describe a scenario. As they are looking at the sheet of paper, say:

**It's years from now and you're looking at a magazine on the newsstand. The cover shows a successful leader in the world. The person on the cover is you.**

Explain that each person is to design his or her magazine cover during the next 5 to 10 minutes. Give fictitious examples such as “Javier Discovers New Comet!” on *Star Gazer*, “Meet the Parrot Lady—Jennie Smith Starts a Sanctuary” on *Animals Today*, or “Book Lover Donates Collection” on *Library Archives*. Tell teens to include their names in the cover headline and emphasize they do not have to be splendid artists to make their point. To get them started, ask:

**Imagine why you are on the cover. What magazine is it? What's the headline? What have you done to deserve recognition? What makes you the leader everyone is admiring? What do people see in you? Think of what matters to you: big or small. Imagine what you really care about or would like to positively affect.**

When everyone is finished, ask for volunteers to stand up, introduce themselves, and show their covers. Invite teens to explain their covers and the leadership characteristics highlighted. At a minimum, provide an opportunity for everyone to introduce themselves even if they don't share a lot about their cover.

## Talk About It

Lead a 10-minute group discussion about the various ways different people view what makes a leader. Ask:

- **How did it feel to think about yourself in the future and on a magazine?**
- **What makes it difficult or easy to think of yourself as a leader?**
- **When you see a magazine cover with a well-known person, what distinguishes the person as a respected leader versus a celebrity?**
- **Do you think being on a magazine cover means the person is a leader? Why or why not?**
- **Why do you think many people believe a person has to do something monumental to be considered a leader?**

## Wrapping Up

For “Think and Write About It” (pages 6–7 in *Everyday Leadership*), let participants know whether they are to answer specific questions or all of them, or if they're to choose a few themselves. Suggest as they write their responses they consider what their magazine cover means to them and keep in mind what others in the group shared.

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### Think and Write About It

In this session's activity, you imagined yourself some years from now as an accomplished leader on the cover of a fictitious magazine. Now think about ways you already are a leader. Consider what you do every day and what you care about: how you help your family, groups at school or where you live, a part-time job, your attitudes. Reflect on ways you have changed because of your involvement. If you aren't sure of your own leadership skills, think about what you want to do. Write your responses to one or more of the following statements or questions.

I consider myself a leader at \_\_\_\_\_ because  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_


I don't consider myself a leader at \_\_\_\_\_ because  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

People at \_\_\_\_\_ consider me to be a leader because  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

People at \_\_\_\_\_ don't consider me to be a leader because  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

to select what resonates for them individually but also involves challenging themselves to improve their skills. To close, you might say:

**Remember, what may be simple for an outgoing person may be more difficult for someone who is shy or reserved. Also, even if you've practiced some leadership skills previously, you may feel a bit uncomfortable at first about doing something new. Believe in yourself and keep practicing.**



### Do Something About It

To commit to learning about leadership, it's important to put your thoughts into action. Choosing to act can help you take being a leader to the next level, assist you in finding out more about yourself, or inspire you to do something that before now you couldn't imagine doing.


Check the goal(s) you will set to demonstrate your leadership abilities. If you have ideas of your own that you prefer, add them on the lines provided. Then write a date by which you plan to put your goal(s) into action on the "To Do By" lines and the date you completed them on the "Did By" lines. Be sure to fill in "What I Did to Achieve My Goal(s)."

	To Do By	Did By
<input type="checkbox"/> I will do what I can to help a new teen in my neighborhood, school, or youth group feel welcome.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> I will sit next to someone other than one of my friends in one of my classes or other activities and offer my help.	_____	_____

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When you think of yourself as a leader, what expectations do you have of yourself?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What expectations do you feel others have of you as a leader?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



For future reference, you may want to put a check next to the questions you are assigning.

Before ending the session, remind teens to choose a couple goals from "Do Something About It" (pages 7–8 in *Everyday Leadership*) and create an appropriate time-frame to achieve them—a week, two weeks, a month, and so forth—and write it down. Instruct participants also to write down the actual date they achieved the goals and to describe what they did to achieve those goals. Make clear that there are no right or wrong choices; encourage all

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	To Do By	Did By
<input type="checkbox"/> I will find out what teen leadership positions are available at school or with a community group or program.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> I will talk with my friends or family about the ways they think I am already a leader.	_____	_____
Other "Do Something About It" Ideas		
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____

What I Did to Achieve My Goal(s)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

