

# What is Leadership?

**Introduction:** Leadership is the ability to lead; it is the ability to inspire confidence and loyalty so that others follow willingly in order to achieve a desired goal. It means connecting with people and understanding them. Leaders are made, not born. A leader is not always the person with the “authority” and leadership may change as circumstances change.

## What Are the Qualities of a Leader?

A leader...

- Brings out the best in others. A leader inspires, motivates, and treats others with courtesy and respect. A leader understands that all people are different and may need different direction and guidance to help them be the “best they can be.”
- Understands and is committed to the team goals. He/she follows through on commitments and does his/her share of the work. When delegating tasks to others, a leader does so courteously and provides direction and tools to do the job. A leader is on time and does not waste his or her time nor the time of others.
- Communicates effectively, including actively listening to others and providing constructive feedback. He or she accepts constructive criticism and asks follow-up questions.
- Takes a stand up for what he/she believes in but is willing to compromise for the good of the team when compromise is necessary. A leader is open to ideas and takes time to listen.
- Uses a problem-solving approach to help the group reach better decisions and facilitates cooperation. Uses a team approach and consensus building techniques to help settle differences when they occur. A leader understands that anytime people get together there is bound to be conflict, but that is not a bad thing, for out of conflict comes new ideas, new options, new solutions.
- Is a person who is enthusiastic, fair, ethical, honest, trustworthy and principled.

## Why Do We Need Leaders?

A leader can help a group of people who are trying to accomplish a goal more quickly and easily through leadership skills. A leader finds out and uses the talents of team members, helps them stay focused, and ensures that the goal is accomplished.

Think about a time you were part of a group with a goal to accomplish and no leader. What happened? Did people go off in different directions? Was no one responsible for seeing that tasks were done? Did people lose interest? Were timelines not met? Without a leader, chaos can occur.

**Advantages of Becoming a Leader**

Becoming a leader will help you mature and earn the respect of others. You'll learn how to coach others, motivate, manage time, organize and delegate work, solve problems, communicate ideas, listen to others and provide constructive feedback, persuade and convince others, and gain self-confidence. You will learn new skills and how to more effectively use the skills you now have. Acquiring leadership skills will better prepare you to become a good employee, since all of these skills will no doubt be needed in whatever career field you choose. You can also use these skills in other endeavors, such as school, sports, and other youth group activities.

**How Can You Become a Leader?**

People become leaders, first, by becoming good followers. By learning about their strong and weak points. Studying the qualities of a good leader. Assuming responsibility. Being a good listener. Motivating others to work toward team goals.

People become leaders by volunteering to chair committees. Running special events. Putting forth extra effort to ensure that the job gets done. Being visible. Following through on commitments. By working hard and putting the goals of the team ahead of personal goals.