



## Take the Lead

### Lesson 1: Qualities of a Leader

*Grade level:* 6-8

*Learning objectives:*

Participants will learn:

- the definition of leadership
- why leadership is important
- the characteristics/traits of a leader
- to identify their leadership qualities

*Codes for TEKS:*

English

*Codes for 40*

*Developmental Assets:*

- Positive peer interaction and influence
- Young people are engaged in learning
- Stimulating activity and homework

*National Education Standards:*

Language Arts

*Life Skills Model:*

Leadership  
Teamwork  
Social skills  
Communication

*Time required:*

60 minutes (may extend to more than 1 day if needed)

*Equipment/materials:*

Pencils  
Newsprint or chalkboard  
Markers or chalk  
Scotch™ tape or masking tape  
Index cards (optional)

*Handouts/support materials:*

Building Leadership  
Who Am I?

*"The moment you stop learning, you stop leading."*

*– Rick Warren*

Today we are going to begin a unit on leadership. What is the first thing that pops into your mind when you hear someone mention the word "leadership?"

Allow participants to answer.

The term "leadership" can be defined in many ways. It may be an office held with an organization, company or group. What are examples of this definition of leadership?

Possible answers: president, chairman, vice president, secretary, other officer titles.

Leadership may also be a title passed down from one generation to the next. What is an example of this form of leadership?

An example would be a king or queen passing the title to his or her child.

Another definition of leadership is to provide guidance or direction. In a group, individuals may take on the leadership of different tasks. Leadership involves having a positive influence on other members of a group and helping the group achieve its goals.

Let's take a quick survey. If you believe that leadership ability is something you are born with, line up on the left side of the room. If you believe that leadership is a skill that can be learned, line up on the right side of the room.

Allow participants to make their choices and move to the left or right side of the room.

Actually, both things could be true. Some people have a natural ability to lead, while others learn to be good leaders. Researchers who study leadership have learned that the skills and traits necessary to be an effective leader change from one situation to another, depending on the needs of the group.

Have young people return to their seats.

So what qualities do you have that make you a leader? I would like you to use the Building Leadership handout and think for a minute about the leadership traits or characteristics you think you have. Write one characteristic in each block. If you come up with more than ten, add more blocks and keep listing as many as you can think of. I'll give you a couple of minutes to complete this activity.

Distribute the Building Leadership handout and a pencil to each participant.

Let's see what leadership traits you came up with. I'll start a master list. Each of you will name one of the leadership traits you have until everyone has had a chance to name at least one. As a trait is mentioned, if that same trait is on your paper put a check in that box and we'll avoid duplicating answers. We'll keep going with the list until all of the traits have been identified from your individual lists.

Record the leadership traits on a chalkboard or newsprint paper.

Now that we've listed all of your ideas, are there any other traits not on our list that you feel it's important for a leader to have?

Here is a list of potential leadership traits. Add any of these the young people don't mention. They may think of others to add as well.

Adaptable	Has endurance	Motivator
Caring	Enthusiastic	Optimistic
Communicates well	Fair	Organized
Competent	Facilitator	Planner
Compromises when necessary	Flexible	Problem solver
Confident	Has high standards	Punctual
Courageous	Honest	Resolves conflict
Creative	Shows initiative	Respectful
Decision maker	Has integrity	Role model
Decisive	Involved	Sense of humor
Delegator	Good judgment	Tactful
Dependable	Knowledgeable	Team player
Direct	Listens well	Unselfish
Encourages others	Loyal	Has vision

Is it important for every leader to have every trait we have listed? Why? Why not? Do any of you have all of these leadership traits?

Allow participants to debate this question.

It is really not necessary for a leader to have all of these traits. One person may be great at organization, communication and teamwork, but may not be able to manage conflict.

Is a person a leader all of the time? No. Leadership should change as situations change. The best leaders are those who can recognize that they should step down and let someone else lead in different situations.

### *Activity: Who Am I?*

**Preparation:** Copy the Who Am I? cards and cut them apart. You might laminate the cards so they can be used more than once.

**Instructions:** We are going to play a game called Who Am I? Have any of you ever played the game 20 Questions? This game is similar but there is no limit on the number of questions each person may ask. I have a stack of cards with the name of a famous person on each card. These people may be political figures, TV personalities, actors/actresses, business men or women, athletes, or fictional characters. I'm going to tape a card to each person's back. Your job is to figure out who your character is by asking questions of the others in the group and narrowing down the possibilities until you can identify your famous person.

1. Tape one card to the back of each person in the group. Young people should not be able to see their own cards. (Be sure to cover up any reflective windows or mirrors in the room to prevent cheating!) Make sure long hair is moved to the side so the card can be seen by the other members of the group.
2. Have everyone mingle and ask questions of each other to try to identify the famous people on their cards. The people being questioned should be shown the cards so they can answer accurately.
3. All questions should be phrased so that the answer can be given as a "yes" or "no." For example: You could ask "Am I a female?" but you could not ask "How old am I?"
4. Participants ask only one question to each person until they have circulated through the whole group. If they still have not discovered who their famous character is, have them continue until they figure it out.

**Discussion questions:**

- Were you successful in figuring out your famous person?
- About how many questions did you have to ask before you solved the mystery?
- What were the most unusual questions asked?
- Do you know of any leadership traits that your famous person or character possesses?

***Activity: Who Am I? (Version 2)***

Instead of using the Who Am I? cards, allow each child to write the name of a famous person on an index card. It should be someone they admire for their leadership skills. Remind them to try to think of people most members of the group will recognize. Take up their index cards and shuffle them. Then follow the instructions on the previous page.

***Extended activity: Famous Faces Research***

If computer access is available, have the participants research a famous leader and discover the answers to the following questions. (You may provide a list of leaders to choose from or allow participants to choose their own.)

- the leader's family and background
- how the person became a leader
- a significant contribution for which the leader was responsible
- obstacles the leader had to overcome to become successful
- a well-known quote from the person

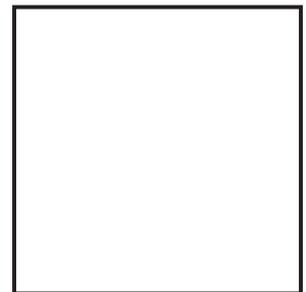
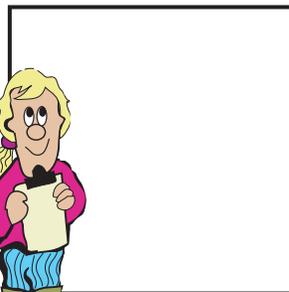
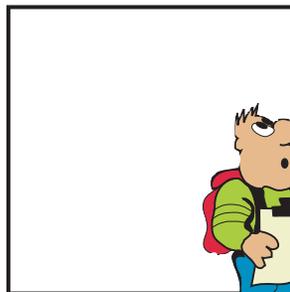
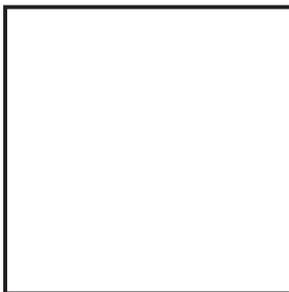
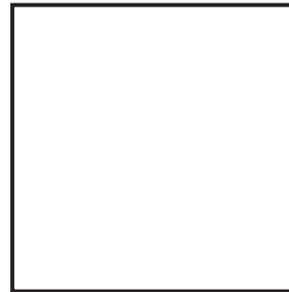
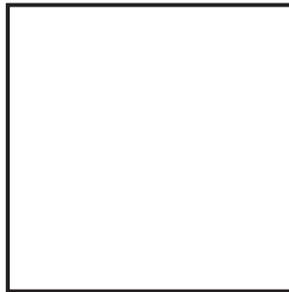
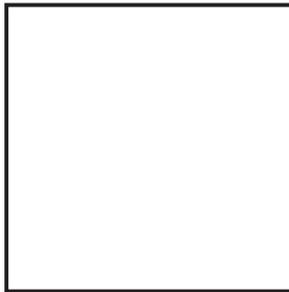
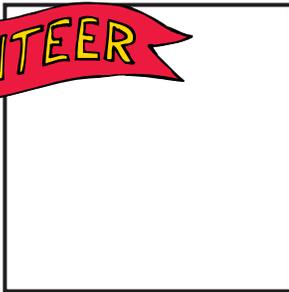
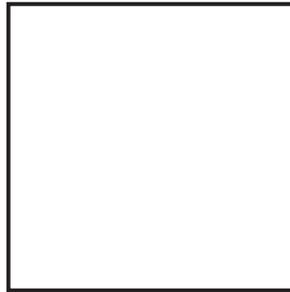
Here are few great Web sites to assist with this activity:

- <http://www.biography.com/>
- <http://www.famouspeople.com/>
- <http://www.who2.com/>
- <http://www.aboutfamouspeople.com/>
- <http://www.50states.com/bio/> (identify a famous person from your state to research)
- <http://www.famousbirthdays.com/> (identify a famous person who was born on your birthday to research)
- <http://www.quoteland.com/>
- <http://www.brainyquote.com/>
- <http://www.wisdomquotes.com/>

After the participants have finished their research, ask each of them to give a report to the group to practice their public speaking skills.

# Building Leadership

In the blocks below, list characteristics or traits of leadership that you possess. If you come up with more than 10, add more blocks!



**“Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them.”**  
John C. Maxwell

**Who Am I? – page 1**

**George W.  
Bush**

(U.S. President)

**Magic  
Johnson**

(retired pro basketball player)

**The  
Pope**

(religious leader)

**Martin  
Luther King**

(human rights activist)

**Betsy  
Ross**

(seamstress of the U.S. flag)

**Mother  
Teresa**

(missionary to the poor)

## Who Am I? – page 2

**Benjamin  
Franklin**

(discoverer of electricity)

**George  
Washington**

(first U.S. President)

**Michael  
Jordan**

(retired pro basketball player)

**Oprah  
Winfrey**

(talk show host)

**Peyton  
Manning**

(NFL quarterback)

**Julia  
Roberts**

(actress)

## Who Am I? – page 3

**Beyonce  
Knowles**

(professional singer)

**Tony  
Hawk**

(professional skateboarder)

**Abraham  
Lincoln**

(former U.S. President)

**Larry the  
Cable Guy**

(comedian)

**Chris  
Rock**

(comedian/actor)

**Jim  
Carrey**

(actor)

## Who Am I? – page 4

**Thomas  
Jefferson**

(writer of U.S. Constitution;  
former president)

**Christopher  
Columbus**

(discovered America)

**Bill  
Gates**

(founder of Microsoft  
Corporation)

**Elmo<sup>®</sup>**

(Sesame<sup>®</sup> Street character)

**Mickey  
Mouse<sup>®</sup>**

(Walt Disney<sup>®</sup> character)

**Carrie  
Underwood**

(American Idol<sup>®</sup> winner;  
country music singer)

## Who Am I? – page 5

**Usher**  
(professional singer)

**Albert  
Einstein**  
(inventor; mathematical genius)

**Pablo  
Picasso**  
(artist)

**Regis  
Philbin**  
(talk show host)

**Bob  
Barker**  
(game show host)

**Vanna  
White**  
(Wheel of Fortune® hostess;  
turns letters)

## Who Am I? – page 6

**Ty  
Pennington**  
(host of Extreme Makeover–  
Home Edition®)

**Eva  
Longoria**  
(actress)

**Superman**  
(fictional character)

**Helen  
Keller**  
(teacher who was deaf and blind)

**Tyra  
Banks**  
(model; talk show host)

**Tiger  
Woods**  
(professional golfer)