Developing Personal Leadership

Objectives

- Understand one's personal preference (strengths) for leading others
- Identify ways to build on personal leadership strengths
- Determine techniques for developing weak areas

Advance preparation

- Review the material provided

Materials needed

- Computer and projector
- CD with PowerPoint presentation
- Copies of values assessment
- Flip chart
- Markers
- The Value of Work activity (Attachments 1-3)
- Leadership Styles (Attachment 4)

Time needed

- 90 minutes

Background

Leadership is an important component of anyone's life. Being leaders enables us to stretch beyond our limits. Learning to be good leaders is something we all can do and should aspire to do.

In this quest for personal leadership we must develop the ability to see a need for change in the world and a desire to work for that change. We become motivated leaders when we strive to improve our own lives.

Bennis and Goldsmith identified the need for leaders in every community, every neighborhood and every church. They say that every person should create visions for the future that will inspire commitment, foster creativity and stimulate achievement.

We will begin with a values assessment because our natural strengths as leaders are often based on our values.

Interest approach (20 minutes)

Using The Value of Work activity (Attachment 1) and The Value of Work survey (Attachment 2) is a fun, easy way to identify important values. It allows participants to score and then rank ten different values, including leadership.

This activity works best with small groups of four or five, but it can also work with larger groups. The attachments include instructions, a questionnaire sheet, and a scoring card. You will need a flip chart and markers for discussion.

Hand out copies of The Value of Work survey. Explain to participants that although it is titled The Value of Work, they should try hard to think more
broadly about the statements and apply them to their lives, families, etc. Have each participant score each statement on a scale of 0 to 4 (0=Not Important to 4=Very Important). Allow 5 to 7 minutes. Then hand out the scoring sheet and have participants rank their values.

After they have completed the survey, ask participants what their top three values were. Ask them to explain and give examples of those values and how they are currently represented in their lives. Reiterate that personal leadership is tied to personal values and that these values should be seen as their personal strengths. It is important that, as a leader, you work to make sure everyone you come in contact with feels important and has an opportunity to contribute to the group.

Lesson

1. Open the discussion by reading Victor Frankl’s statement about human freedoms (slide 2).
2. Review objectives for the lesson (slide 3).
3. Complete The Value of Work questionnaire (slide 4, Attachment 2).
4. Group participants according to their top-ranked value. You could have any number of groups, but no more than ten.
5. Have the groups work on their definition of leadership. Consensus should be reached. Allow 5 minutes for this discussion. Have a member of each group report on the group’s definition. Discuss any similarities and differences among the groups. You can use a flip chart and markers to make notes (slide 5).
6. Review definitions of leadership from the experts. Reiterate that everyone has a different perspective and different values, and that this is what builds a leadership definition that is personal and meaningful (slides 6-10).
7. The next discussion is about personal qualities of leaders. Ask each participant to think of a leader they know and three to five admirable characteristics of that leader. You may have someone who wants to do the inverse, a sort of “what not to do.” Use the flip chart and markers to record responses (slide 11).
8. Review the list of leadership styles. You don’t need to go into a lot of detail; brief definitions of each may be provided. See Attachment 4 (slide 12).
9. The primary focus of the leadership practices will be the five identified by Kouzes and Posner. These are transformational leadership practices. Additional information is provided at the end for personal assessment.
10. Discuss each of the five practices, along with the ten challenges (two challenges per practice). Ask participants to provide feedback and discuss each, with pros or cons, examples, etc. (slides 13-17).
11. Discuss the perceptions of individuals demonstrating these leadership practices. Reiterate that these are valid practices and can help them become better leaders (slides 18 and 19).
12. Not everyone will be good at all five of the practices. With that in mind, have participants think of one of the five practices, along with the two challenges, that they might not be strong in. Have them identify two things they could do in the coming year to improve in those practices. For example, if inspiring a shared vision is an area of perceived weakness,
have the participant identify two ways to develop or hone that practice. They could discuss talking about a family vision, or personal vision, etc. (slide 20).

13. The point of this slide is that the turtle could not have gotten there alone. End the session by talking about the fact that we all need help to become effective leaders. Encourage participants to talk about leadership and the five practices with others and to make an effort to bring these practices to their every day lives (slide 21).

14. Review the objectives (slide 22).

Conclusion

Participants should feel inspired to work on the two strategies listed (slide 20) during the activity and motivated to hone their leadership skills in their work, family or community responsibilities.

References