



# Introduction to the Student Leadership Challenge

**Grade Level:** 6 –12     
 **Lesson Plan Timeframe:** 2–3 45-minute classes     
 **Program Topic:** Student Leadership Challenge Intro.     
 **State:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **Chapter/School:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Overview &amp; Purpose</b> To provide an overview and introduction to <i>The Student Leadership Challenge</i> and <i>The Five Practices and Ten Commitments of Exemplary Student Leadership</i> .	<b>Career Clusters and Pathways</b> All
<b>Lesson Plan Goals &amp; Objectives</b>	Identify and explore characteristics of effective leaders. Examine the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. Apply the Five Practices to personal experiences and real life situations.
<b>Materials Needed</b>	<p><b>Supplies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notebook paper</li> <li>• Pen/pencil</li> <li>• Post It notes (several per student)</li> <li>• Chart paper or poster paper</li> <li>• Markers</li> <li>• Other poster making supplies</li> </ul> <p><b>Handouts:</b></p> <p>Five Practices and Ten Commitments of Exemplary Leadership overviews, one for each student          PP slides or handouts of each practice, one for each group</p>

<b>Introduction of Subject</b>	<p>Ask students to journal their responses to the following prompt: <i>Think about someone in your life that you consider to be a leader. What makes this person a leader? Discuss your experiences with this person. How does this person make you feel when you are involved with this person? What leadership attributes does this person exhibit? Be as detailed and specific as possible.</i> Let students know ahead of time they will be sharing their journals with their classmates.</p> <p>After providing enough time for students to write a response, put them in groups of three to five. Ask students to bring their journal entries and provide each group with a pad of Post-It notes. Students take turns reading their journals. Every time a leadership trait or action is mentioned, students will record the trait on a Post-It. If the trait is mentioned more than once, a slash mark can be made next to the trait each time it is mentioned.</p> <p>Engage students in a whole-class discussion asking each group to take turns sticking notes in a central designated location and sharing their leadership attributes list.</p> <p>Possible questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> How did you decide on your leader to write about?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What did you notice about the different attributes each of you shared?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Are there others that came to mind after having some discussion that we should add or you wish you would have included in your journal?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Which of these attributes do you possess? Can you give an example that shows this in your own life?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What attributes would you like to develop as a leader? Explain.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> What relationship do these leadership attributes have to your experiences as a student leader?</li></ul>
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<p><b>Activity 1</b></p>	<p>Introduce TSLC to the students, showing the book if available (if a class set is available, distribute books to each student at this time). Share that we all possess leadership attributes and this book will be a resource as we consider what it means to be a leader, recognize what leadership traits we currently practice, and how we can continue to grow and develop as leaders. Kouzes and Posner have spent many years researching leadership. Through their leadership research, they discovered some common themes in practices that exemplary leaders do. They have titled these <i>The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership</i>. Introduce the Five Practices to students. Key points to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership is learned, and everyone has the potential to be a leader.</li> <li>• It's not about personality; it's about developing behaviors that are part of our daily practice.</li> <li>• Not all leaders are the same, but exemplary leaders regularly engage in five common practices:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Model the way</li> <li>2) Inspire a shared vision</li> <li>3) Challenge the process</li> <li>4) Enable others to act</li> <li>5) Encourage the heart</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>These Five Practices are the core of the student leadership challenge.</p> <p>Divide students into five different groups assigning each group a different practice (or ten groups representing each practice twice). Provide each group with an overview of a different practice. Have students create a poster that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The practice and the two commitments</li> <li>• What this means in students' own words</li> <li>• A picture/image that represents this practice and encompasses both commitments</li> <li>• An example of this practice in action (may be an example from a personal experience or something the students create)</li> </ul> <p>After providing sufficient work time, display the posters around the room and have each group share. <i>Variation:</i> Instead of presenting, students complete a gallery walk (individually walk around the room and observe each poster) taking notes on each practice.</p>
<p><b>Activity 2</b></p>	<p>Redistribute Post-It notes from the beginning of the lesson so each student has at least one, though students may have more than one. Have students categorize attributes by sticking them next to the poster that best encompasses that attribute. Students should be prepared to justify their responses. If they feel the attribute fits in more than one category, have them select the <i>best</i> place for it. <i>Since multiple groups created their own lists, traits will more than likely fit in more than one category. Where students place traits and why will only lead to deeper discussion.</i></p> <p>Share and discuss where students placed each attribute and why.</p>

<p><b>Activity 3</b></p>	<p>Explain to students that “With leadership, as with many things in life, experience can be the best teacher. We learn to do by trying it ourselves or by watching others. The problem is that not all of what’s done or observed is effective or appropriate behavior. So it’s important to base our leadership practices on the best of what people do or see—those times when people perform at their best as leaders or when we observe others at their best” (Kouzes and Posner, 2008, p. 23).</p> <p>Ask students to recall a time when they were at their very best as a leader. This experience could be something connected to school, their family, their community, or workplace. Provide time for students to describe the context of this situation or experience. Encourage them to consider the experience itself, when it occurred, who was involved, and what challenges they faced.</p> <p>Next, ask students to look at their description and list the most important actions or behaviors they took as a leader in this situation (what things did the student do that made a difference in this situation).</p> <p>Assign students a partner or a group of three. Have students share their personal best experiences and the actions and behaviors that exhibited as leaders. Encourage students to share any actions they hear that their partner(s) may not have identified and add that to their list. You may want to also provide an opportunity for students to share their personal best with the whole class.</p> <p>Possible questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What behaviors did you recognize in yourself that you already possess?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What behaviors/traits do you think you could improve/build on?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What did you learn from your peers’ personal best experience(s)?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Why do you think it’s important to think about your personal best experience as a leader?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How can you apply what you have learned in your daily experiences/activities? Give specific examples.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary/Evaluation</b></p>	<p>Explain to students that leadership is everyone’s business and it affects all of us. It is not about position or rank, but it is about a process that anyone can understand and learn. Just like any other skill or behavior, it can be strengthened through commitment and practice as long as we are interested in improving ourselves and developing our own leadership potential (Kouzes and Posner, 2008, p. 22). Ask students to think about how they feel about their leadership abilities and what they can do to grow as leaders as they learn more about TSLC.</p> <p>Students may be evaluated on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal entry</li> <li>• Teamwork/collaboration</li> <li>• Poster activity</li> <li>• Personal best writing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Resources</b></p>	<p>TSLC Chapters 1 and 2</p>

<b>Additional Notes</b>	<p>The poster activity can be executed in several different ways, students could create using standard classroom resources; scrapbook materials, magazines and craft supplies could be provided; students could complete a computer generated poster or PowerPoint slide that could be put into a master PP presentation; or other. Teachers/advisers should select a method that works best for their students and conducive to the resources available to them.</p> <p>The personal best activity can be assigned prior to the lesson as homework or conducted in class depending on how much time is available. Teachers/advisers may also find it helpful to write their own personal best leadership experience to use an example with the students. As teachers complete this activity, it is also useful to save copies of student examples to be used for future lessons. Students' personal best accounts could also be displayed on a bulletin board or in the classroom and revisited as the class progresses through each lesson/practice.</p>
<b>Source</b>	Kouzes, James and Posner, Barry. <i>The Student Leadership Challenge</i> . San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2008.