



Unit: Understanding Leadership

Skill 1: Defining Leadership

Activity A: Leaders That You Know

Activity Skills:

Small group interaction, brainstorming, listening and discussion.

Leadership Skills:

Understanding what makes a good/bad or effective leader.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Leadership names on small pieces of paper.
- Blank pieces of paper.
- Pencils or pens for writing.

Do Ahead:

Copy and cut up pieces of paper with names of famous leaders (included); feel free to change or add to names.

Source:

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BACKGROUND:

Introduce the group to the notion of leaders as people that have influence -- bad people can be effective leaders in that they have a lot of influence, and great people can be ineffective leaders because as nice as they are, they don't influence people effectively.

As we think about famous leaders, are we assessing the person, or their leadership abilities?

WHAT TO DO:

Break into small groups of 3-5 people for discussion. Give each group a handful of famous leader's names to prompt their session, and provide several blank strips of paper to each person so they can write in leader names they think of. Give them ~5 minutes to brainstorm leaders and review the leader names within their small groups, both new and provided. Then ask the group to take ~10-12 minutes to work through several questions with regard to the leaders –

- 1) Why is this person a leader?
- 2) What is your first impression of this leader – good or bad? Why?
- 3) In this case, does good or bad refer to the person or their abilities as a leader?
- 4) Is the person an effective leader but a bad person? Why?
- 5) Is the individual a good person but a poor leader?

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- What kinds of people did you think of as leaders?
- Were they famous (known by many), or local (known by student(s) personally)?
- How did making the distinction between being a good or bad person and a good or bad leader impact your ideas about leadership?

Apply:

- Do you like leading or following better? Why?
- What do you think defines the people who you perceive as leaders in your life?

Next time you are thinking about leaders, how would this exercise change your perceptions?

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Notes:

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Have individuals pick a leader to research outside of class. Specifically, have students investigate how this person became a leader, and what training or experiences shaped their leadership abilities.

Resources And Web Links