

# Once Upon a Leader

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Tales of Legendary Leadership for Middle and  
High School Youth Leaders

School Educator's Toolkit

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## Introduction

Thank you for your commitment to developing the youth leaders of today. We know that as a middle school or high school teacher you see endless opportunities to help your students develop and hone their leadership skills. This toolkit is designed to help you make the most of those opportunities. Included for your use is:

- An animated video
- This discussion guide with follow-up activities
- A printable poster featuring the video characters and their leadership messages

## About the Video

***Once Upon a Leader: Tales of Legendary Leadership*** offers a whimsical, yet powerful, look at leadership. Through the use of animation and familiar tales to promote several practices of effective leaders, familiar characters will lead students on a journey to discover the value of:

- Truth and Integrity
- Maximizing Diversity
- Vision and Foresight
- Focusing on the Goal

## A Note About Tales and Fables

Originally, tales and fables were not intended for children. They were used to present lessons on ethical behavior, to enhance understanding of a topic through the use of stories, or to explain natural phenomena prior to scientific discoveries. Research shows that people of all ages appreciate an opportunity to learn while having fun. The effectiveness of tales and fables is in their simplicity. They cut through the detail and make a point in an entertaining manner.

## The Experience

This guide provides you with both facilitator tips for how to introduce the video, ***Once Upon a Leader: Tales of Legendary Leadership***, and thought-provoking questions to help stimulate discussion around the four leadership practices:

- Truth and Integrity
- Maximize Diversity
- Vision and Foresight
- Focus on the Goal

## Activities for Continuous Learning

You'll find a series of 40 activities in this toolkit to assist you in making leadership development a healthy habit. Activities are clustered into six categories: Improving Your Leadership Qualities, Reflection on Leadership, Aesop Fable With a Moral for Leaders, Applying Leadership Qualities to a School Scenario, Quotations About Leadership, and Profile of a Leader. Because each activity is self-contained, you can select the most appropriate mix based on the unique needs of your students.

Integrating these activities into your lesson plan is easy. Many of the leaders that are profiled can become part of your history or daily news lesson plan, while Aesop Fables and quotations about leadership should fit well with your literature curriculum. Each activity is designed to take no more than 15–20 minutes to complete. They can be used as a full-class exercise, or they can become part of your students' individual development plans. For example, you can have students work together in small groups as they examine the four qualities that Prince Percy learns about on his journey, or you can pair an individual student with a mentor for a one-on-one exploration of all the activities.

The ultimate goal of the *Once Upon a Leader* toolkit is to help prepare your students—our future leaders—to take advantage of the daily opportunities they have to make a positive difference—both at school and at home. And, like Prince Percy, we hope that their leadership journey ends “Happily Ever After!”

## Learning Outcomes

*Facilitator Tip:* If appropriate for your school, share the learning outcomes with the students.

When you have completed this program, you will be able to:

- Describe and explain four lessons about leadership as presented in the video.
- Give examples of how these lessons can be applied in your school, community, and family lives.
- Commit to a process of continuous learning in your goal to be an effective leader.

## Before Watching the Video

*Facilitator Tip:* Ask for volunteer responses to the following question:

- **When you think of leadership role models, who do you think of? (Expected responses: sports figures, famous musicians, parents, teachers, church leaders, politicians, movie stars)**

Ask a few polling questions (asking for a show of hands) to generate interest and excitement for the training session.

- **How many of you feel these role models always set a good example of what you believe leadership is really all about?**
- **Follow up by asking “why or why not?”**
- **Many people who we look to for leadership role models send us mixed messages. For example, sports figures that are arrested; musical industry divas that are married and divorced in a week; teachers that violate trust of parents; politicians that are impeached, recalled, and sent to jail.**
- **How many of you would like to learn simple lessons about leadership that you can use as guiding principles in your personal development?**

*Facilitator Tip:* Introduce the video explaining what the students will experience.

- **Today we're going to have some fun and examine leadership through a few tales with characters you're sure to recognize.**
- **At the mention of fables and tales, you may be thinking that the program will be like watching the Cartoon Network, and although it is fun, it isn't SpongeBob, South Park, or The Simpsons. As you watch the video, you'll experience tales of leaders and the qualities they demonstrate. While watching, try to identify with the characters and reflect upon your time as a peer leader. Think of the challenges that you have faced, or are currently facing, and how any or all of these lessons might apply.**

## After Watching the Video

*Facilitator Tip:* The questions below are intended to promote thoughts about leadership. Select questions that are most relevant to your students. Be sure to acknowledge a variety of responses to maximize participation.

*Facilitator Tip:* Remind students that we are not using this discussion as a time to point fingers or name leaders that have been like Percy before his awakening. Instead, it is a time to reflect and apply the lessons to the environment that we are part of and learn how to improve our personal leadership skills.

Before going into specific leadership lessons, start by asking a polling question to see if anyone “saw” themselves or leaders they know in the stories.

Sample polling questions:

- **How many of you saw qualities—good or bad—that you possess reflected in the characters of these stories?**
- **Did any of these stories make you think of leaders you know or leadership “role models”?**

Transition to discussion-oriented questions by saying: **I could tell that you enjoyed the tales. Now, let's take some time to apply what we've seen and heard to the challenges that you face as youth leaders in your school, community, and home.**

- **Until he saw the error of his ways, what characteristics of ineffective leadership did the Prince display?**

*Possible responses:* indifferent to others; arrogance; considers others as stupid and lazy; unable to inspire others; unwilling to learn.

- **Where did Count DuProfit go wrong?**



*Possible responses: arrogance; not focused at all on people (only profit); became greedy*

- **What could Prince Percy have done to make a happy ending for Count DuProfit?**

*Possible responses: found DuProfit's strengths and welcomed him into the country in an effort to maximize diversity, focused on the goal of the kingdom to be economically sound, and found a way to use DuProfit's skills in that area.*

- **Have you or others in leadership roles ever acted without thinking—or from gut level emotions—and created unhappy endings when you could have created happy endings with additional thought? Or at least lessened pain for others involved?**

*Possible responses: (will vary) hastily made decisions that were a result of poor planning, lack of foresight, failure to maximize diversity, and failure to plan with the goal in mind. An example might be a coach failing to take out the "best" player even though he/she is not performing and others on the bench could perform better—failure to maximize diversity.*

## Questions About Truth and Integrity

- **The first lesson that Percy needs to learn is truth and integrity. What do you think is meant by truth and integrity?**

*Possible responses: (will vary based on age of group) the key is not to get wrapped up in the little lies that people tell and test parents through the youth years, instead look at the larger issues of truth and integrity and act in accordance with personal and school values. Look for and encourage discussions about cheating, plagiarism, fake IDs, drinking and driving, and the planning that is sometimes done in creating stories to teachers and parents.*

- **The Emperor talks about truth and integrity. What are examples in your school, home, or community of ways in which leaders demonstrate truth and integrity?**

*Possible responses: walks the talk; follows through on promises and commitments; always does "the right thing"; honest and ethical with others; my parents/principal/teachers follow through on punishments and rewards; they are consistent with each of us; we have the honor code at school*

- **What examples have you seen in the news, heard on the radio, or read about on the Internet that show leaders failing to act with truth and integrity?**

*Possible responses: Enron, WorldCom, Martha Stewart, Michael Jackson, Kobe Bryant, Bill Clinton, teachers that are helping students cheat*

- **What were consequences for these leaders? Were there any positive outcomes from their lack of truth and integrity?**

*Possible responses: lost money; lost faith of their families; unemployed; jail time; loss of image. Positives may have been at the time they were acting unethical, they were winning, popular, etc., but then they got caught.*

- **As youth leaders you are setting the path for your future leadership style. How can you avoid finding yourself in similar situations and choosing the dishonest path over the one of acting with truth and integrity?**
- **Is it always easy to take the path of truth and integrity?**
- **Have there been times that you have questioned the truth and integrity of leaders around you?**
- **How did that affect you and your view of them as role models?**

*For example, you come in late but everyone is asleep. In the morning your parents thank you for getting in on time; do you confess or let it slide? You know that you are only allowed to stay at someone's house if his or her parents are there. How do you respond when your parents ask if adults will be there and you know there will not be any adults home? How do you act when you are given a copy of your history mid-term one week before the exam? As a volunteer at the hospital, what do you do when you see others stealing from patients?*

## Questions About Maximizing Diversity

- **What does diversity mean and how are we diverse here in our school and community?**

*Possible responses: Everyone has unique skills, which, in combination with the skills of others, contribute to the success of any endeavor. Be sure to stress that diversity is more than race, age, gender, religion, etc.*

- **How does Snow White illustrate the power of people's diverse skills?**
- **How has our school benefited because leaders value the diverse talents of the students?**
- **How has your family benefited from the diversity of each member?**
- **How have the clubs you are part of benefited from diverse membership?**

*Possible responses: creative solutions to problems or issues, improved processes, winning streaks for our team, "A" on group project, things get done quicker, jobs are handed out to people that possess the strength*

- **What are some examples of ways that you have leveraged diverse talents to create a stronger team or accomplish more?**

*Possible responses could include a coaching experience, planning a dance or fundraising event, running for student government*

## Questions About Vision and Foresight

- **What do you think it means to have vision and foresight?**
- **Is it harder to have vision and foresight because you do not have as much experience to draw from? Or is it easier because you are young with open minds and creative new ideas? How many say it's harder? How many say it's easier?**
- **Arnold the Pig is a great believer in the values of planning and vision. What “wolves” will always be outside your doors, huffing, puffing, and threatening to blow the doors down?**

*Possible responses: tough and persistent competition; school rivals; peer pressure; lack of interest; boredom; lack of support; shortsightedness; lack of creativity and innovation in applying our skills*

- **What are some personal “wolves” we need to be aware of and plan for?**
- **The strongest schools or teams are those in which everyone assumes responsibility for leadership. What are some things that every individual can do every day to practice values of planning and vision?**

*Possible responses: look for ways to improve personal skills; support peers in their roles and responsibilities; think of innovative ways to enhance relationships; treat all people with respect*

## Questions About Focusing on the Goal

- **Focusing on the goal enabled T.R. Tortoise to beat the hare to the finish line. What are some “distractions” that keep us from reaching personal goals?**

*Possible responses: lack of planning and vision; lack of integrity and truth; discounting the value of diversity; ineffective leadership; lack of belief in our skills and abilities; seeing other people who we believe are better or faster than us*

- **What are two or three goals you would like to focus on to improve your effectiveness as a leader?**

*Acknowledge all responses as worthwhile goals.*

- **What is your role in removing distractions that prevent others from reaching goals?**
- **Aside from what we've already discussed, what “aha's” or insights about leadership have you gained from the *Tales of Legendary Leadership*?**

*Acknowledge the value of all responses.*

## Introducing the Supplemental Activities

The following activities are provided as a resource to help students focus continuously on improving their leadership competencies and are designed so you can integrate them into other lessons. There are 40 activities, one for each week during a school year.

*Facilitator Tip:* Use the supplemental activities as weekly reminders of leadership opportunities. Many are short, thought-provoking or self-reflective assessments that can start off the week or kick-off a meeting. You may want to conclude your video session with the following comments:

- **We tend to think of leaders as high profile and heroic people who transform the world of sports, rule major companies, or champion crusades to improve society. Their faces dominate magazine covers or MTV news. The reality is that most leaders are people like you and I who work impressively, but often behind the scenes—to make the world, our community, and our schools better places—as students, siblings, teachers, parents, and citizens.**
- **The majority of challenges calling for leadership are everyday situations in our school, community, and personal lives. Everyday situations, however, are not unimportant situations.**
- **The Prince took a trip that afforded him experiences to gain an understanding of the importance of leadership, what leadership means, and how to do it. Over the next several weeks, we will take 15 minutes once a week to focus on an additional activity to help you continuously sharpen your leadership skills.**

## Lesson 1 – Aesop Fable with a Moral for Leaders

Read the fable. Before you look at the moral and possible messages at the bottom of the page, reflect on what you believe the moral is and the message of the fable for leaders.

### *The Bundle of Sticks*

*An old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered his servants to bring in a bundle of sticks, and said to his eldest son: "Break it." The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the bundle. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful. "Untie the bundle," said the father, "and each of you take a stick." When they had done so, he called out to them: "Now, break," and each stick was easily broken. "You see my meaning," said their father.*

What do you believe is the moral of the fable?

Which leadership quality/qualities are demonstrated in the fable?

What is a message of the fable for leaders?

When have you been part of an unbreakable team?

Does being unbreakable mean you always have to win?

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Moral: *Union gives strength.*

Leadership Qualities: *Maximize Diversity*

Possible Message for Leaders: *Leaders who capitalize on the diverse strengths of individuals help to build unbreakable teams.*

## Lesson 1 – Applying Leadership Qualities to a School Scenario

Suppose you are faced with the challenge below.

*Your team is beginning to test all your skills as the team leader. The team has responsibility for a class science fair project that would increase end of semester grades for everyone on the team.*

*The project, however, is falling more and more behind schedule. Tomorrow's meeting, therefore, is extremely important to get team members back on track and get things moving forward at a quicker pace.*

*In past meetings, team members have either not met their agreed-upon action steps, or have provided inaccurate information. For example, Michael agreed to get materials for the presentation board. But, he always seems to have an excuse about how difficult it is to get to the store. You have heard sighs and seen other signs of frustration from team members. Another example is that in past meetings, Melissa presented data recorded during the experiment that was seriously challenged by other team members as inaccurate. Team members, therefore, were losing confidence in Melissa's abilities to report changes in the plants' growth.*

Which leadership qualities would be right for you to use to address the situation? Select the appropriate quality and reflect upon the reasons for your selection(s) before looking at possible answers at the bottom of the page.

- ☐ Truth and Integrity
- ☐ Maximize Diversity
- ☐ Vision and Foresight
- ☐ Focus on the Goal

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*Possible answers: Actually, using any one or more of the competencies might be appropriate. The key to your answers is your reason for using one or more of the qualities.*



## Lesson 1 – Improving Your Leadership Qualities: Pre Assessment

Begin your trip with an assessment of your leadership qualities. At the end of your trip, you will take a post assessment to learn if you believe that you have improved your skills.

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For each statement below, circle the number that reflects the level of your knowledge and/or skills regarding “leadership.” Remember! There is not a secret document that has the “right” answers. The “right” answer is what you believe your knowledge and skills are.

**I am able to identify and describe the four qualities of leaders as demonstrated in *Once Upon a Leader: Tales of Legendary Leadership*.**

High      4      3      2      1      Low

**I am aware of both strengths and weaknesses concerning my leadership qualities.**

High      4      3      2      1      Low

**I am able to demonstrate and effectively apply leadership qualities in peer situations.**

High      4      3      2      1      Low

**I have the respect and credibility of others for my leadership qualities.**

High      4      3      2      1      Low

**I am currently following a personal leadership plan based on clearly defined and actionable steps.**

High      4      3      2      1      Low

## Lesson 1 – Profile of a Leader: Oprah Winfrey

*Oprah Winfrey was named one of the 100 Most Influential People of the 20th Century by TIME magazine, and in 1998 received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.*

*Some call her lucky, but Oprah Winfrey doesn't believe in luck. She believes "luck is preparation meeting opportunity." Other comments by Oprah are:*

*"I think the most important thing to get ahead falls back to what I truly believe in, and that is the ability to seek truth in your life. That's on all forms. You have to be honest with yourself."*

*"I surround myself with people who are smarter than I am because I can always learn from them."*

Select the leadership qualities that Oprah demonstrates.

- ☐ Truth and Integrity
- ☐ Maximize Diversity
- ☐ Vision and Foresight
- ☐ Focus on the Goal

What messages does Oprah have for you as a leader?

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*Possible messages: Truth and Integrity—be truthful to yourself as well as to others; Maximize Diversity—greater success and satisfaction comes from respecting and learning from the ideas of others; Vision and Foresight—visionaries prepare for opportunities because they think of and prepare for what might be, rather than counting on luck.*

## Lesson 1 – Quotations About Leadership

*People seldom improve when they have no other model but themselves to copy after.*

—Goldsmith

*The ultimate leader is one who is willing to develop people to the point that they eventually surpass him or her in knowledge and ability.*

—Fred A. Manske, Jr.

These two quotations have a common message. Select the quality that you believe relates to the message of both quotations.

- ☐ Truth and Integrity
- ☐ Maximize Diversity
- ☐ Vision and Foresight
- ☐ Focus on the Goal

What do you think the message is within these quotes?

When have you learned from others and has that made you a better leader?

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*Possible answer: Maximize diversity. A great leader does not think of herself/himself as an island of knowledge, control, and power. A great leader knows that real power is in the collective knowledge and wisdom of many people.*

## Lesson 1 – Reflection on Leadership

Many leaders are people who work impressively, but often behind the scenes to make the world a better place. When you think of “leaders,” therefore, think of people you admire for their leadership qualities. They can be peers, teachers, employers, siblings, parents, and friends. Everyone can be a leader, because “leadership” is best defined by what people *do*, not by his or her position or role in life.

In column A are the four qualities of effective leaders. In column B, write the names of people you believe are excellent models of each quality and the specific actions that demonstrate their leadership abilities. In column C, make notes about what you can do to “be like them.”

Column A Leadership Qualities	Column B “Leaders” You Admire	Column C What you can do to “be like them”
Truth and Integrity		
Maximize Diversity		
Vision and Foresight		
Focus on the Goal		