

LEADERSHIP SKILLS



There are some basic skills you will need to know as you work with your YOU chapter. Although this is not a conclusive list of leadership skills, these four skills will be a great help to the YOU Sponsor, Uniteen Leader and YOUers stepping into leadership roles.

<p>Encouragement NOT Praise Praise: You Look Nice Today Encouragement: I like the way you coordinated your shirt & slacks today... or ... I was impressed with the ideas in your talk</p> <p>Encouragement is specific and focuses on details</p> <p>Positive Reinforcement: Positive Post Event Discussion –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ What did you LIKE about the way you managed the event? ♥ What would you do differently next time? <p><i>(Negative reinforcement would be ... you shouldn't ... or never ...)</i></p>	<p>Listening Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Give your complete attention ♥ Be in an environment without interruptions; cell phones, etc. ♥ Show support with body language; nodding, eye contact, smiling, etc. ♥ Mirroring – I heard you say – was that what you meant – How can I support you? <p>Making Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Identify Issue what is bothering us... do we want to do ♥ Brainstorm solutions or ideas ♥ Assess each solution ... ♥ Develop Plan of action ... what needs to happen? What support do we need? Who will be involved and how? ♥ Take action ... put plan into place ... assess as you go ♥ Process when task/event complete
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(Source: YOU Handbook, Association of Unity Churches)

GOOD LISTENING SKILLS

Most people agree that the ability to be an effective listener is one of the most important aspects of communication. Interestingly, though, many people feel they are inadequate listeners.

Today, communication specialists recommend creating a "listening field" where genuine listening can occur. A listening field is:

- ♥ Giving your complete attention to the person while he or she is talking.
- ♥ An environment without interruptions or distractions
- ♥ Showing support of the person through body language (eye contact, nodding your head, smiling).

More than anything, the youth within your YOU chapter need your loving attention. When you listen with a compassionate ear and seek to genuinely understand the challenges they face in their lives, you become an Instrument of healing.

Whenever you have the chance, create listening opportunities for your chapter members;

- ♥ Hold listening training sessions with the YOU members. Have the teens practice:
 - Giving total attention to the speaker.
 - Observing body language.
 - Giving feedback on what was heard.
- ♥ Go on a field trip and observe communication skills.
 1. How well do sales people listen to customers at the mall?
 2. How well do parents listen to their children in the supermarket?
 3. How well do students listen to one another at school?
- ♥ During class sessions, give feedback to demonstrate that you have listened for meaning. Have the students do the same by using the following steps:
 1. Summarizing Content
 - I heard you say
 2. Clarifying Meaning
 - Was that what you meant?"
 3. Identifying Needs
 - "How can I support you?"

Source: YOU Handbook, Association of Unity Churches

10 TIPS FOR GOOD LISTENING

1. Stop Talking. You can't listen if you're talking
2. You must want to hear what they have to say
3. Listen to understand, rather than to reply. Don't argue or criticize.
4. Repeat the speaker's words to verify you understand what they're saying ("This is what I hear you saying...")
Do not try to evaluate or interpret ("This is what you mean...")
5. Appreciate that feelings and perceptions can change
6. Ask questions
7. Remove distractions
8. Listen patiently. Allow plenty of time
9. Empathize. Accept the speaker's feelings as valid, no matter how different they may be from your own
10. Maintain eye contact and breathe through your heart

Source: Uniteen Program Guide, Association of Unity Churches

Leadership Tips

New to leading a group? Here are few tips to help you relax and enjoy the experience.

PREPARATION

- ♥ Prepare well in advance
 - If possible prepare 2-3 weeks in advance
 - Being well prepared will help you to relax and your meeting will go more smoothly
- ♥ Carefully read the instructions for leading the activity.
 - Be Sure you understand how the activity works
 - If you have questions check with your adult assistant or youth director prior to the meeting
- ♥ Gather all the supplies you will need
 - Check with your adult assistant or youth director before spending money on supplies
 - Keep all materials together
- ♥ Do any necessary preparation well before the meeting (i.e. making game boards, preparing and photocopying handouts, selecting music, etc.)
 - Don't put off preparations, you may run out of time
 - Preparing materials Sunday morning just before the meeting will likely raise your stress level and reduce your personal prayer time
- ♥ Arrive early to prepare your meeting space and center yourself
 - Be sure to spend some time in prayer and meditation just before your meeting
 - Take some time to make your space warm and inviting. Play some walk-in music and have all of your materials conveniently placed

LEADING DISCUSSIONS

- ♥ Prepare questions before the meeting to help you get the discussion started
- ♥ Avoid questions with yes or no answers. For example, instead of asking "Do you like the song?" you could ask "What do you like or dislike about the song?"
- ♥ Order your questions so they progress from the fact to the non-personal to the personal. Conclude the discussion with a question that explores how the lesson or experience changes their perspective. (See Education Tab – Living Curriculum)
- ♥ Include everyone in the discussion. If one or two members are answering all the questions, ask others by name. Or ask those who tend to dominate the discussion to wait for a moment while we hear from some of the others. Don't be afraid to wait through a few minutes of silence while members form their thoughts.
- ♥ Don't dominate the discussion yourself
 - You have spent some time with the subject matter and may have lots to say. Avoid the temptation to lecture. It will be far more effective to allow the group members to think through the issue by themselves.

Resources: Letting Young People Take Charge. Elaine Clanton Harpine. Group Publishing. 1989.

"You Can Birth A Lesson Too!" Education Links. Winter 2002. p.4-5.

6 WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF YOUR GROUP

1. Provide Adequate Resources/Safe Space

- ♥ It is the leader's responsibility to make sure group members have the tools they need to succeed. Curriculum, supplies, etc.
- ♥ Create a safe space, where Uniteens are both physically and emotionally safe.

2. Team-Building/Group Building

- ♥ Make sure those you lead are a single-minded team and not a group of individuals. (See Chapter Tab – Group Building)

3. Accountability

- ♥ Follow through on projects and check in with those you lead
- ♥ Check in with those you must report to (YMD)
- ♥ Hold Uniteens accountable for their actions/choices. Uphold agreements and follow through with consequences
- ♥ Keep accurate attendance records
- ♥ Uphold deadlines for paperwork, etc.

4. Honor Learning Styles & Individual Needs

- ♥ Disruptions are often caused by boredom. Honoring individual learning styles and needs results in better focus and less disruptions. (See Education Tab – Multiple Intelligences)

5. Improve Communication

- ♥ Never assume that because something is clear to you it is clear to others.
- ♥ Frequently solicit feedback to ensure that you are being clear.

6. Preparation

- ♥ Be sure to spend enough time preparing for and practicing the lesson material ahead of time.
- ♥ Spend time daily in prayer and meditation
- ♥ Remember to take time for yourself
- ♥ Pray before the Uniteens arrive.