

Topic: Working Through Challenges



Learning Objectives - Students will be able to:

- Apply the Leadership Ladder to work through real-life challenges.
- Collaborate with peers to evaluate choices.
- Reflect on how positive decisions can lead to personal growth and a positive impact on others.

Materials

- Working Through Challenges student handout (Leadership Ladder)
- Leadership Scenario Cards (one per small group)
- Pens or pencils
- Chart paper or whiteboard (optional, for recording ideas during the guided example)

Lesson Plan

1. Ask students: Can anyone think of a challenge they've faced recently?
 - Allow several students to share.
 - Then explain: Every person, including Aaron Judge, faces challenges. What separates leaders from others isn't whether they experience difficult situations. It's how they choose to respond.
 - "Today, we'll learn a simple strategy called the Leadership Ladder that can help us think through challenges and make positive choices."
2. Display the Leadership Ladder for students. Explain each step.
 - Step 1 - What is the challenge? Every problem begins by understanding what is happening.
 - Step 2 - What choices do I have? Most situations have several possible responses. Leaders pause to consider their options before acting.
 - Step 3 - What is the best first step? Leaders take positive action, even if it's only one small step.
 - Step 4 - How can I grow from this experience? Challenges help us build leadership qualities such as courage, empathy, perseverance, responsibility, and confidence.
 - Step 5 - How can my actions make a positive difference? Great leaders think beyond themselves and consider how their choices affect others.

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Lesson Plan

3. Practice Together

- Read the following scenario aloud.
 - A new student has joined your class. During lunch and recess, you notice they are usually by themselves. Some classmates don't include them because they already have their own groups of friends.
- Guide students through each step of the Leadership Ladder together. Encourage multiple ideas and remind students that there may be more than one thoughtful response.
- Write answers on chart paper or the whiteboard.

4. Small Group Activity

- Divide students into small groups.
- Provide each group with one Leadership Scenario card.
- Explain: "Work together to climb the Leadership Ladder. Discuss each step before writing your answers. Be prepared to explain your thinking."
- Allow approximately 10-15 minutes for discussion.

5. Group Share

- Invite each group to briefly present.
- Rather than reading every answer, ask each group to share:
 - The challenge they identified
 - The action they chose
 - Why they believed it demonstrated leadership
 - The positive impact they hoped it would have
- Encourage students to notice similarities and differences between the groups' responses.

Debrief Question

Ask students to complete this reflection independently:

- What is one challenge you may face this week, and how can you use the Leadership Ladder to respond like a leader?

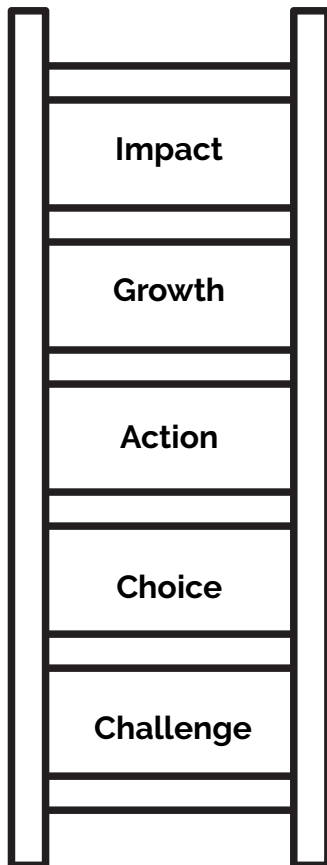
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Working Through Challenges

Directions: Read the Leadership Scenario Card assigned to your group. Work together to use the Leadership Ladder to think through the challenge and decide on the best course of action. Be prepared to explain your group's thinking and share your solution with the class.



Step 1: What is the **challenge**? Describe the situation.

Step 2: What **choices** do you have? Think about different ways you could respond.

Step 3: What is the best first step? Choose one **action** that demonstrates leadership.

Step 4: What can you **learn** from this experience? Which leadership qualities will you **strengthen**?

Step 5: How could your choice make a positive **difference**? Think about how your actions could affect yourself and others.



Leadership Scenario Cards

A Tough Setback (Perseverance & Motivation)

You've been working hard to make the baseball team, school play, or another activity you enjoy. When the list is posted, your name isn't on it. You're disappointed and wondering if you should quit trying.

Speaking Up (Courage & Integrity)

During class, a group of students begins making fun of another student after they give the wrong answer. You know the comments are hurtful, but you also don't want your classmates to make fun of you.

The Group Project (Teamwork & Communication)

Your class has been assigned a group project. Two students are arguing, one person isn't participating, and the deadline is only a few days away.

Online Kindness (Digital Leadership & Empathy)

A classmate shares an embarrassing photo of another student in a group chat. Several people begin reacting with laughing emojis and making jokes. You see the messages but haven't responded yet.

Asking for Help (Self-Awareness & Mentorship)

You're struggling in one of your classes. Your grades are dropping, and you're beginning to feel frustrated. You know there are adults who could help, but you're worried they'll think you aren't smart enough.



Leadership Scenario Cards

Leading Through Service (Community & Initiative)

Your teacher asks for volunteers to organize a school service project. You think it sounds like a great opportunity, but you've never led something before.

Owning a Mistake (Responsibility & Integrity)

While working on a classroom activity, you accidentally break something that belongs to your teacher. No one saw what happened, and it would be easy to walk away without saying anything.

Helping Your Community (Service & Leadership)

Your class wants to make a difference in your community, but everyone has different ideas. Some students want to collect food, others want to clean a park, and others want to help an animal shelter.

Sharing the Credit (Humility & Teamwork)

Your class wins a competition after working together for several weeks. During the celebration, one teammate begins taking all of the credit for the group's success, even though everyone contributed.

The Team Captain (Initiative & Communication)

Your coach asks you to be captain for the next game. One teammate doesn't agree with your decisions and begins arguing with you in front of the team.