

▲ The Christian Leader Paradox ▲

Objectives: LEAD participants will choose to serve in order to lead.

Plan ahead:

- Time required: 50 min
- Buy, label and hang up all the socks on a high clothes line; plan class for a place nearby
- Plan how to divide the group

Supplies:

- A pair of socks for each LEAD, with one of each pair labeled "Leader" and the other "Servant"
- White board or newsprint and pens
- One penny for each group

Accompanying documents:

- Christian Leader Paradox Handout (last page of the is file)
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Note to the instructor: Whenever you say, "pair of socks" say it like the word, "paradox." The idea with the socks is to have something very memorable that helps them remember that Christian Leadership is founded on Service.

❖ **Get Started (hook, 15 min)**

(Go to a high up clothes line and look at all the socks hanging up there.) This is how we view leadership. Something to be sought after, something high up and worthy of striving for.

And this is how we often view Christianity, of high morals and making us into "good" people. Even people "above" everyone else. BUT...

(Take the socks down, have the LEADs put them on their feet and put their shoes back on.)

When you put Christian and Leadership together, what you get is humble Service, often unseen or unnoticed; taking the lowest place; serving the needs of the helpless and unfortunate. Jesus is our example. Did anyone take a lower place than Jesus? He left Heaven and everything good and perfect to come and serve our greatest need: the need for release from our sin by way of a relationship with Him.

There is no *lower*, more *humbling*, more *difficult* place than Christian leadership. Let's go explore this in a more conducive place. (Take them to where you will do class.)

❖ **Learn / observe (book / look, 30 min)**

In John 13:15 Jesus says that He has *"given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."*

Let's look at the example He has given us.

LEARNING TASK (10 min): (Divide the group and the verses so each group of 2-3 LEADs has 1-2 verses - see "the servant of all" Handout.) Read the passage aloud in your group. Answer two questions:

- Who is the example of leadership?
- What is the role of the leader or the "one who is first"?

We'll share our answers in 5 minutes. (Review the questions they are to answer and ask what questions the LEADs have.)

(Bring the group together and get their answers. Write them up on the board.)

Summary: Jesus is the supreme leader over all creation and all of us. Both in words and in example, as you all pointed out in this exercise, He served, and He asks us to follow His example.

What happens when we serve people? In your groups again, you'll consider two sides to service.

LEARNING TASK (10 min): (Give each group a penny. Keep a penny as a visual aid.) On one side of the coin is a head.

Put your penny HEADS-up in front of your group and discuss **how the leader benefits** when the leader serves the people. For example, what was Jesus' greatest act of service? (death).

What happened to Jesus as a result of Him serving us? (He can understand what we go through and He can help us. *"Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered... For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.* Heb 5:8 and 2:18. On a bigger scale, the way things work in God's economy is that we must first suffer and serve before being lifted up and rewarded: Philippians 2:5-11, which is on the Handout.)

So with the penny HEADS-up you'll discuss **how the leader benefits** when the leader serves the people.

I'll tell you when half the time is up, and we'll flip the penny over. Looking at the TAIL of the penny, discuss **how the group benefits** when the leader serves their needs.

For example, what happened to US because of how Jesus served our needs? (We now have salvation - and an example to follow.)

Before you start, let's talk a little about what "needs" are. Needs are not *wants*. We don't run around trying to make everyone happy and take away anything difficult for them.

- What are legitimate needs that people have in order to live? (Food, water, shelter, clothing, social / emotional support...)
- Compared with third world countries, do we have many of these "needs" in our country, in your town, among the people you interact with every day? (No. There may be some, but it is not common in the US.)
- But what is the greatest need of every person on earth, in the scheme of eternity? (Salvation from hell and from our sins. That is the need with eternal consequences.)

So when you discuss the leader "serving the people's needs," think on these lines - serving real needs, not fickle, always-changing "wants."

Have each group consider these 2 scenarios, stating the benefits to the leader (heads) and group (tails), when the leaders serves the needs of the group:

- Their **counselor** as their leader
- One **activity instructor**

(Review the questions - HEADS: What happens to the leader..., TAILS: What happens to the group...when the leader serves their needs? Ask what questions the LEADs have. Time 3 min for each side of the coin.)

(Bring the group together and get their answers. Write them up on the board.)

So there are **benefits to the leader that come through serving the needs of the group**. (Review them. Parallel to the example of Jesus, we gain the credibility with them and the ability to speak into their lives. And in Heaven, there will be a reward for us - but that is a discussion for another time. Glory does come, but it only comes after suffering

and service. That's just the way things work in God's economy.)

And there are **benefits to the group when we as leaders serve their needs**. (Ideally they experience the Gospel. They experience the Gospel when someone else chooses to serve them rather than serving their own needs and desires - that is, when someone else "lays down their life for a friend" as Jesus laid down His life for us. When we choose someone else's good over our own convenience, we allow them to experience the Gospel. And hopefully that will draw them nearer to Jesus - either to begin a relationship with Him or to move closer in relationship to Him. If that happens, then we will have served their greatest need...)

When we teach a Bible study, we are serving their needs. When we bring them to the point of knowing exactly how the Bible applies to them in their situation, which is the application or the Took, we are serving their greatest need - a deeper relationship with Jesus.

But we are not trying to "fix" them. The goal is deeper relationship, and the life and actions that result from that, not "doing" a bunch of good things in order to look like a better person, or to "fix their character" in some way. Look at the quote on the bottom of your Handout to help remember this: "We are here to serve their needs, not fix their character."

As socks serve our needs for comfort and protection, or as money (the penny) serves our needs for basic things of life, we also are to serve the needs of those whose lives we cross. And especially those whom God has allowed us to lead. "*Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.*" (Luke 22:26)

❖ **Get Practical (took, 5 min)**

One way to bring yourself back to this truth is to frequently ask, "How can I help?"

Ask it to yourself when considering the event or task you'll lead. If appropriate, as it of people in your group.

Obviously you stay within your limits as a leader. For example, the camp director doesn't DO all the jobs, but she can coordinate between areas of camp in ways that really help people do their own jobs better. Consider how you would feel if you were helping in the kitchen and the manager asked, "How can I help you do your job better or more easily?" There may not be anything she can do - dishes will still get dirty! - but even her asking will have a positive impact on you, because you now know that she has noticed you, and she cares.

So develop the habit of asking, "How can I help?"

Take out your Handout. On the bottom are two statements that are underlined. Take a moment to pray silently and reflect on who God might be asking you to serve and how. Service can take the form of washing feet though that doesn't do much in our culture. It might take the form of spending time with someone, sharing what you have with someone, spending time with them, really listening to them, or maybe speaking difficult words that they need to hear. Things like that. What will help them experience God's love for them through you? How can you choose their good over your own and thus give them a real-life example of the Gospel?

You'll have about 3 minutes to list one or two people and ideas for serving those people. What questions do you have?

(If you have time, consider having the LEADs share what they wrote with their group from the Learning Tasks and maybe even pray in that group, depending on the maturity level of the LEADs.)

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Handout

"the servant of all"

Mark 9:33-37 *And they came to Capernaum. And when [Jesus] was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. 35 And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." 36 And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 37 "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."*

Mark 10:42-45 *And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Also, Matthew 20:24-28)*

Luke 22:25-27 *And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. 27 For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves."*

John 13:12-15 *When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."*

Philippians 2:5-8 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

"We are to serve their needs, not fix their character."

Name of who I can serve: How can I serve him/her: