

## Leadership Curriculum: A Study of Rhetoric and Ethics to Inspire and Achieve Hope

### To Whom, Age, and Length of Time

This curriculum is created for my future children. This will be for my teenage children, starting around age sixteen. The program will take several months, up to even a year. With time, I will develop this curriculum further.

### What They Will Be Able to Do

By the time my children finish this curriculum, I hope they will be prepared to lead others, whether that be in church organizations, school clubs, missions, family, or community. They will lead with kindness and humility, but careful observation and planning. They will be able to lead because they will have great judgment; discernment; accountability; endurance and motivation; planning and modeling skills; ability to collect, analyze, and present information clearly; and people-focus. Also, I hope that through this curriculum they become even more well-rounded so that they are prepared to lead in many different situations and easily connect with many different types of people.

### How to Tell If They Have Learned

Each of the activities they do will have a form of accountability. This will help them to make the behaviors and skills into habits. Thus, by the end of the curriculum, they should naturally be wholesome, accountable (though imperfect) leaders.

### What is Leadership?

Leadership is the ability to guide others to hope and improvement. But leadership is not simply creating an illusionary hope of some golden idea or desire for the nebulous future; the hope instilled through true leadership is a hope that leaders craft by mutual agreement and which that leader then helps others to achieve. Indeed, “modeling is the spirit and center of any leadership effort” (Covey 126). In helping others not only feel hope, but accomplish hope, leaders create plans and then they model. Being able to instill hope in others and guide them to not just see hope but reach and feel hope requires lots of good rhetoric and ethics.

Rhetoric does not mean just words, and it certainly does not mean just eloquence. No, rhetoric is the combination of one’s words, one’s thoughts—even one’s life. In his book *On Duties*, Cicero described it as “uniform consistency in the course of our life as a whole and in all its individual actions” (XXXII). Rhetoric is essential to true and effective leadership: in fact, leadership is impossible without a consistent, wholesome rhetoric. Isocrates said, “words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man’s life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words” (339-341). Rhetoric is the backbone for leadership which allows a leader to flourish. A leader must be trustworthy, and how can he be without consistent rhetoric? Furthermore, it is through rhetoric that hope can be created, expressed, and accomplished. Through rhetoric, leaders inspire their followers to feel hope and see potential.

Just as important to leadership is ethics. As good rhetoric fuels good leadership, good ethics fuel good rhetoric. Before leading anyone, people must be able to govern, or lead, themselves. “Start with the heart. That is, your own heart. If you can’t get yourself right, you’ll

have hard time getting dialogue right” (*Crucial Conversations*, 28). As people foster and uses ethics in their lives, they will become more consistent and trustworthy. “Many things contribute to credibility: the track record of the person delivering the message, the content of the message itself, the communicator’s reputation for integrity and trustworthiness, and the consistency between words and deeds” (*On Leadership*, 48). All of these things deal with ethics. If one is ethical, his or her track record will illuminate personal goodness. If one is ethical, the content of a message would be worthy. If, for some reason, that message is not worthy, the person would be prepared to fix it. Isocrates made this claim. He said, “[honest men] do not remain fixed in opinions which they have formed unjustly, but are in quest of the truth and are ready to be convinced by those who plead a just cause” (283). Continuing, if one is ethical, his or her integrity and trustworthiness would be intact and thriving, and his or her rhetoric would likewise be consistent. It would be consistent because ethics is the basis for good judgment: wisdom is founded on the understanding of rights and wrongs. In turn, good judgment helps people to act consistently. Thus, ethics stabilizes rhetoric.

Not only does ethics stabilize rhetoric, but it is the means that leadership becomes enduring, rather than temporary. In their essay, “Discovering Your Authentic Leadership,” the authors wrote, “Your life story provides the context for your experiences, and through it, you can find the inspiration to make an impact in the world” (165). An ethical life creates a life based on eternal, or fixed laws of good and evil. Thus, if one leads with ethics, that leaders creates something that centers on long-term, enduring things.

## Curriculum Begins

### **Learn Who You Are and Your Potential**

#### **Character Traits:** Grateful, Humble, Confident

I want to begin here to further enhance my children’s ability to see their potential, because as they are able to see their potential, they will more easily recognize that potential in others. As they recognize who they are and how God loves them, they will feel both empowered, but humbled as they continue in the process of progression. Also, if they begin by feeling humbled and grateful, they will be more teachable for the rest of the process. This is also first because for anything to work in leadership, one must have a moral foundation. Do each of the activities prescribed early on in the week and allow them to think about it or write more on the experience for the rest of the week.

#### **Reaffirmation:**

- “Start with the heart. That is, your own heart. If you can’t get yourself right, you’ll have a hard time getting dialogue right” (*Crucial Conversations* 28).
- “When we recognize that we all have weaknesses, it’s easier to find a way to respect others. When we do this, we feel a kinship, a sense of mutuality between ourselves and even the thorniest of people. It is this sense of kinship and connection to others that motivates us to enter tough conversations, and it eventually enables us to stay in dialogue with virtually anyone” (*Crucial Conversations* 72-73).
- “Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves” (*The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit*, 98).

#### **What They Already Know:**

Obviously, they already know they are children of God. They know why they came to Earth. They know about exaltation. However, this reaffirmation is based on helping them serve others and guide others.

**Behaviors and Skills:** Forgive others, be kind to others, express gratitude

**Activities and Projects:**

Week One: Read Alma 13.

- Read Alma 13 and discuss with siblings and parents about our role in heaven and the role we play now. My part in this will be to show them that because we were faithful in heaven, we preached of Jesus Christ. That is still our role. I want to start with the premortal life understanding first, then move on.
  - After they have read and discussed, they should write down what they learned. At the end of the week, they will talk with siblings and parents about what else they have learned since first reading and discussing the chapter.

Week Two: Read or Watch “Discovering the Divinity Within” by Rosemary M. Wixom.

- Read or watch Sister Wixom’s talk. Discuss with siblings and parents about divine identity, what that means, what that makes our goals, and how we must treat others.
  - My part in this will be to mostly guide the conversation. After they have read or watched and discussed, they should write down what they learned. At the end of the week, they will talk with siblings and parents about what else they have learned since first reading and discussing the talk.

Week Three: Read “You Were Born to Lead, You Were Born for Glory” by Sheri L. Dew.

- Same instructions as last two.

Week Four: Begin a gratitude journal.\*

- This will continue past the fourth week. Once they have recognized who they are and what they can become, they need to recognize how intricate God is in that role. They cannot do it without him. This is where the gratitude journal comes in. They can choose to write in it daily (briefly) or once at the end of the week.
  - As part of nightly prayers, express gratitude to God. Parents will check with children sometimes about how their prayers are going. We will also ask them what they are grateful for sometimes. This is a more personal activity and I want to keep it that way.

Week Five: Go on a difficult hike.

- This is to both humble and inspire the children. Hikes can be physically grueling, but they are always helpful in reconnecting with God. It will allow them to appreciate God’s power and their own smallness. However, once they have reached the top of the hike (before they come back), I will have them write down their feelings about God, His love for them, and their own potential.
  - I will go with them on the hike and help them by giving prompts if they cannot think of what to write.

## **Foster Hopes and Create Goals**

**Character Traits:** Hopeful (Visionary), Accountable, (wholesomely) Motivated

Here we are moving into applying vision. I want them to create goals for themselves and what they will accomplish. Early on, they need to create the habit of establishing goals, making plans, and being accountable to those plans.

**Reaffirmation:**

- “Your life story provides the context for your experiences, and through it, you can find the inspiration to make an impact in the world” (*On Leadership*, 165).
- “Plenty of people are motivated by external factors, such as a big salary or the status that comes from having an impressive title or being part of a prestigious company. By contrast, those with leadership potential are motivated by a deeply embedded desire to achieve for the sake of achievement” (*On Leadership*, 14)
- “Self-awareness extends to a person’s understanding of his or her values and goals. Someone who is highly self-aware knows where he is headed and why” (*On Leadership*, 10).

**What They Already Know:**

They already know how to set goals and make plans. However, I want them to make it into a habit for both little and big hopes and plans.

**Behaviors and Skills:** Planning, Return and report

**Activities and Projects:**

Week Four: Create a fitness plan.\*

- The more physically fit one is, the more clearly they can think. Physical fitness also empowers people and makes them available to help others with physical service. Making physical goals also allows for them to create a better understanding and appreciation for endurance, considering the difficulty of building and maintaining good health habits. They will create plans each week for when and how to work out.
  - I (or Trent) will go with them or, if the activity is through a school or club sport, I will make sure that they get to their activity.

Week Five: Create a goal and plan for the family.

- Create a goal that the family can accomplish together, whether it be serious, like a gospel goal, or fun, like a (realistic) family vacation. They will be in charge of understanding or finding out where we stand as a family in relation to that goal and creating plans for how all members of the family can help accomplish the goal. They will be in charge of checking in with family members weekly to see where we stand.
  - I will help give ideas and show them areas of planning they may have not considered. I will help each member of the family return and report to the goal-maker.

Week Six: Study the sacrament.\*

- The sacrament is a perfect way to create goals and learn accountability. Every week we make promises to God, and if we understand the magnitude of the sacrament, we want to keep those promises desperately. Also, as we understand the sacrament, we will learn continual repentance which bolsters good ethics and rhetoric.
  - I will provide scriptures and talks for study. We will read and discuss together individually. The sacrament means different things for different people, so I want it to be a personal experience for them to learn how to connect with Christ. I will help them have time on Saturday or Sunday to prepare for the sacrament the next day.

**Good Judgment and Discernment**

**Character Traits:** Good judgment, discernment

Once they have established that their rhetoric and ethics must be moral and consistent, and once they have learned to make plans, they are ready to begin serving others. However, they must be aware of themselves and how they interact with others. They must also be aware of how people act around them—whether the people around them are honest and good or not. This is a type of collecting information. In addition to this type of information-collection, they need to learn to collect other true information to prepare them to help others and guide them.

**Reaffirmation:**

- “People who are in control of their feelings and impulses—that is, people who are reasonable—are able to create an environment of trust and fairness” (*On Leadership*, 12).
- “What is this intermediate step? Just after we observe what others do and just before we feel some emotion about it, we tell ourselves a story. That is, we add meaning to the action we observed. To the simple behavior we add motive. Why were they doing that? We also add judgment—is that good or bad? And then, based on these thought or stories, our body responds with an emotion” (*Crucial Conversations*, 98).
- “Rhetorical sensibilities also constitute a critical antidote to manipulation through charm or totalitarianism when these trained people are followers” (“Educating Rhetoric Leaders,” 172).

**What They Already Know:**

Hopefully they have already begun to develop good judgment, recognizing consequences for actions. However, I want them to be more aware of good judgment and recognize how critically vital it is to everything they do. I also hope they have begun to learn to discern, but we will develop that further here.

**Behaviors and Skills:** learning motives from rhetoric, gathering and analyzing information, appropriateness

**Activities and Projects:**

Week Seven: Read *Alma* 32.

- Read, looking for what it teaches us about gathering information and learning truth. Discuss with siblings and parents. After they have read, they should write down what they learned.
  - I will help guide conversation when we discuss, showing them what it teaches us. At the end of the week, they will talk with siblings and parents about what else they have learned since first reading and discussing the talk.

Week Eight and Nine: Read Isocrates *Antidosis*.

- Read *Antidosis*, and take notes, looking for how good judgment is taught, how it is recognized, and how it is achieved. Learn why it is important and what it does. Discuss with parents and siblings, then write down what they have learned, including excerpts.
  - I will help point them to important passage as we discuss and help them recognize how rhetoric reveals character.

Week Ten and Eleven: Read *Richard III*.

- Read *Richard III* and take notes on how they recognize corruption in Richard and wholesomeness in other characters. Note that Richard fools some people and he doesn't fool others. How and why? How do we recognize Richard's deceit and villainy?
  - Discuss with parents the questions above. I will show them, if they cannot recognize, the ways that rhetoric exposes each character. Help them recognize as we discuss that they can do this in their own lives.

Week Twelve: Attend a music performance.

- The children will have been playing instruments for many years by this point. Through this exercise, I want to help them recognize that rhetoric is not just in words, but in actions. It is in motives. Also, I want to give them another visual example of discerning as they listen for intonation, tone, and style choices or mishaps in themselves and in the performance they attend.
  - “As therefore a musical ear detects even the slightest falsity of tone in a harp, so we, if we wish to be keen and careful observers of moral faults, shall often draw important conclusions from trifles” (*On Duties*, XLI, 146).
  - I will help them to find and attend a performance for their particular instrument. I will go with them in attempts to help them recognize the subtleties of what the musician does. (We will discuss this after the performance, not during it). We will discuss what we learned from the performance.

Week Thirteen and Fourteen: Read *Othello*.

- Read *Othello*, specifically analyzing Iago and Othello’s characters. How did Othello fall? What is he like at the beginning of the play vs. the end of the play? How did Iago use rhetoric? How did he get away with it? How could Iago have been stopped?
  - Read *Othello*, thinking about the questions above. Discuss with parents the questions above. I will show them, if they cannot recognize, the ways that rhetoric exposes each character. Help them recognize as we discuss that they can do this in their own lives.

Week Fifteen and Sixteen: Read Wilson’s *The Art of Rhetoric*.

- Read *The Art of Rhetoric* to learn about rhetoric revealing character and how to gather and analyze information. This is the final activity specifically geared toward discernment, though other activities will incorporate it. Help them to recognize that it is about getting all the information they can and learning how to use it.
  - Read and discuss with parents and siblings. My part in this will be to mostly guide the conversation. After they have discussed, they should write down what they learned.

## Helping Others

**Character Traits:** Inspiring, Loving others, Thorough

Now that they know how to discern others and collect information in order to help them, they need to learn how to use those traits and skills to interact with and actually inspire others to action. This is a loving endeavor of working alongside people, not ahead of them.

**Reaffirmation:**

- “To view as a whole so great an extent of subject matter, to harmonize and bring together so many diverse varieties of discourse, to connect smoothly what follows with what goes before, to make all parts consonant one with another, was by no means an easy undertaking” (*Antidosis*, 191).
- “Modeling is the spirit and center of any leadership effort” (Covey, 126).
- “The leaders’ most important role is to instill confidence in people” (*On Leadership*, 69).

**What They Already Know:**

**Behaviors and Skills:** modeling skills, ability to present information clearly, aligning others, people-focus

**Activities and Projects:**

Week Seventeen and Eighteen: Focus on friendships.

- Begin some friendships with new people, especially those who may need a friend. Foster those friendships they already have. They will need to know how to interact and connect with people. I especially want them to come up with ways to serve their friends, not just hang out with them. This service will give them an opportunity to practice modeling because service requires working alongside others to accomplish a task.
  - “Being able to build trusting relationships [with those outside the tight inner circle] is a requirement for effective leadership” (*On Leadership*, 185).
  - I will help them have time to spend time with people and think of ways they can serve their friends.

Week Nineteen and Twenty: Read *Crucial Conversations*

- Read *Crucial Conversations*, annotating as they read. After they have read, discuss with siblings and parents about how to interact with and inspire others.
  - I will point them to important passages. After they have read and discussed, they should write down what they learned.
  - I will also ask them what types of crucial conversations they might have coming up with friends or family. We will talk through what they can do to make it a positive experience, even role-playing if they are really nervous.

Week Twenty-one through Twenty-three: Read *The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit*

- Read *The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit*, annotating as they read, specifically looking for how to model and align others. After they have read, discuss with siblings and parents what they wrote down and annotated. After they have discussed, go make notes of what they have learned and write down ways they can apply it to themselves.
  - I will guide them to important sections in the book and help them analyze ways they can apply it in their lives.

Week Twenty-four: Write and deliver an advisory speech

- Write an advisory speech on something that matters to them. Incorporate everything they have learned: apply it to their audience, whether that be to their friends, their family, their ward, etc.; discern the best way to share the speech; find, analyze, and share accurate information; share plans on how to accomplish the goal they present; deliver the speech.
  - This project will mostly be done on their own. I will give them the instructions above and guide them to past sources that could help them write a successful speech. They will then present the speech to the family.

\*: Activities that they will continue to do past the weekly period, hopefully continuing forever.

#### Works Cited

Ancona, Deborah. Malone, Thomas W. Orlikowski, Wanda J. Senge, Peter M. “In Praise of the Incompetent Leader.” *On Leadership*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, pp. 179-196.

Bennis, Warren G. Thomas, Robert J. “Crucibles of Leadership.” *On Leadership*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, pp. 97-113.

Cicero, *On Duties*. Cambridge University Press, 1991. Print.

Covey, Stephen R. *The 8th Habit : from Effectiveness to Greatness*. New York, Free Press, 2004. Print.

Drucker, Peter F. "What Makes an Effective Executive." *On Leadership*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, 2011, pp. 23-36

George, Bill. Sims, Peter. McLean, Andrew N. Mayer, Diana. "Discovering Your Authentic Leadership." *On Leadership*. Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, pp. 163-177.

Goffee, Robert. Jones, Gareth. "Why Should Anyone Be Led By You?" *On Leadership*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, pp. 79-95

Goleman, Daniel. "What Makes a Leader." *On Leadership*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, 2011, pp. 1-21.

Grenny, Joseph. Switzler, Al. McMillan, Ron. *Crucial Conversations*. McGraw-Hill Education, 2012. Print.

Heifetz, Ronald A. Donald, Laurie L. "The Work of Leadership." *On Leadership*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, 2011, pp. 57-78

Isocrates, *Antidosis*. Harvard University Press, 1928. Print.

Kotter, John P. "What Leaders Really Do." *On Leadership*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, 2011, pp. 37-55

Olson. "Educating Rhetorical Leaders." Print.