



Following *Jesus*, the Ultimate *Leader*



Leader's Guide

Group Devotional Guide for Appalachia Vision Trip

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. —Colossians 3:17

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Welcome!

Leader's Introduction

Your team members are about to do wonderful things for the people of Appalachia and great things for the Lord! This devotion guide will add yet another dimension to your Vision Trip experience: Learning and applying biblical leadership principles that can make a difference in participants' lives long after they return home.

This devotion focuses on World Vision staff's core characteristics that dovetail with servant leadership. It is designed to challenge your team to integrate into their lives the leadership characteristics Jesus demonstrated during his time on earth. Each day your group will explore a different characteristic associated with Servant Leadership, such as innovation of passion for ministry.

Your team will have many opportunities to think about, discuss, and record what they are learning during your time in Appalachia. They will grow together through small group settings, corporate worship time, and during the hours they work on site. They also will have opportunities to grow through personal reflection as they use their journals to consider questions related to the daily devotions.

As a leader, you have the opportunity to encourage that growth. This devotion guide is designed as a tool for you to nurture participants through your small groups. But remember, it is only a tool. Feel free to use this material as it works best for your group. You may want to use some of the discussion questions, but not others. You may prefer to customize the material for your particular group. And, if participants zoom in on a specific topic, feel free to let them fully explore that issue. The goal is to enhance learning and life application—not to plow through all the material.

Please consider the following as you begin this devotion:

- Ask team members to bring their journals to devotions so they can record what they are learning.
- Leader instructions are in bold-faced italics, so you can pick these out quickly.

Whether you are a new or seasoned leader, you have a wonderful opportunity to model Servant Leadership during your time in Appalachia. Some of your fellow leaders who are new to small group discussion may especially benefit from your support and encouragement. Taking time to nurture one another will make this experience more effective for everyone participating.

Thank you for partnering with World Vision in equipping the people of Appalachia. May you and your team be blessed as you grow together in faith during this Vision Trip—and beyond!



Day Two Morning

Becoming Learners: Enriched by Diversity

Leader's Notes

Today's Objective: Team members will be able to explain how open-mindedness and a spirit ready to learn contribute to leadership.

Introducing today's theme:

Today we begin our time in Appalachia focusing on becoming learners, and being enriched by the diversity we see around us. There are many ways we can approach this week ahead of us—and we need to choose one:

- We can **choose to center on ourselves**, our needs, our frustrations, our feelings.
- Or we can **choose to center on other people's** needs, feelings, and situations.
- We can choose to go through this week with a **closed mind and spirit**, with an assumption we have the answers, and that others need to be more like us.
- Or we can choose to **open our minds and spirits**, be sensitive to what we can learn from others and God, and see new ways we can be more like those we meet. It's our choice.

Group Discussion:

Understanding that as learners we are enriched by diversity, what are your thoughts on these questions?

- What kind of people do you think are good learners?
- What attitudes do you think you need to learn well?
- What things come to mind when we think of the word "diversity"?
- How can appreciating how people and situations are different help us learn?
- Why do you think appreciating other's differences is important to being a leader?

Going Deeper

(Ask participants to listen to the following verses and think about what is being said in terms of learning and appreciating our differences. Ask different participants to read the following scriptures aloud, and invite all to answer the questions following the scriptures:)

Romans 12:3-5: For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Ephesians 5:15: Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise.

Proverbs 4:13: Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.

- What do these verses say about God's view on diversity? On learning?
- What does Romans 12:3-5 say specifically about how we should think of ourselves? Why do you think God asks us to do this?

Application

(Allow quiet time for team members to read and reflect.)

How will you choose to spend this week? Will you be a person who looks for valuable lessons, is ready to learn from the people of Appalachia, and values the differences between yourself and others? Or will you allow differences to become barriers, and miss valuable learning opportunities? Spend time reflecting on how you can "be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2) during this week, and be mentally and spiritually ready to appreciate others, to learn, and to grow.

End your session in prayer.

Remind Your Team: Be sure to take time to read today's journal reading "***Enrich Your Lives,***" which looks at how we can become better leaders as we become better learners. If you haven't done so, also make time to read yesterday's journal reading "***Compassion Begins Here.***"

Day Three Morning

Becoming Servant Leaders

Leader's Notes

Today's Objective: Team members will be able to describe the qualities of a Servant Leader.

Introducing today's theme: Yesterday we examined the importance of being learners and appreciating each other's differences. Today we continue to build our leadership skills by focusing on serving. As Christians, our calling is to be Servant Leaders, which is a much different model from what secular leadership can be.

Begin by reading Matthew 20:27-28: Whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Group Discussion

- What does this verse tell you about being a leader?
- What characteristic is emphasized here, and why?
- In what ways did Jesus serve others?
- How can you serve one another and others in the community this week?

Going Deeper

(Ask participants to listen to the following verses and think about what is being said about servant leadership. Ask different participants to read the following scriptures aloud, and invite all to answer the question that follows each verse:)

Deuteronomy 6:4: Fear the Lord your God, serve him only.

Leader shares: This is the same verse Jesus quoted when he was tempted by the devil in Matthew 4:10. Considering this verse, where does God-inspired leadership begin?

Luke 9:1-2: When Jesus called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Leader shares: The Apostles were Jesus' hand-trained leaders, the 12 who were entrusted with the future of the Church and faith in Jesus. What specifically did Jesus send them out to do? How do these assignments demonstrate servant leadership?

Application

(Allow quiet time for team members to read and reflect.)

Jesus demonstrated ultimate leadership on earth:

- He was more concerned with others than himself.
- He encouraged cooperation not conquest.
- He chose to lead with love, instead of instilling fear.

Spend time considering how you can reflect Christ's leadership style, setting aside competitive personal gain to love, encourage, and lead others. Then begin to act on your ideas today.

End your session in prayer.

Remind Your Team: Be sure to read today's journal reading "***Modeling Servant Leadership,***" which looks at how Christian leaders are called to love no matter their title or position.

Day Four Morning

Becoming Innovative Storytellers

Leader's Notes

Today's Objective: Team members will be able to explain why innovation and storytelling are essential to effective leadership.

Introducing today's theme: Yesterday we focused on how servant leadership reflects Jesus' form of leadership by placing others before ourselves. Today we will continue to build on the servant leadership model by looking at how innovation and storytelling are essential to developing as Servant Leaders. God has blessed each one of us with faith, and the ability to think and communicate with others. Equipped with these three gifts, we are able to lead in innovative ways. One of those innovative ways we can lead is by storytelling.

Group Discussion

- What words come to mind when you think of the word "innovator"? [**Point:** An innovator is someone who has vision, the ability to embrace that vision, and the courage to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of that vision.]
- Give a show of hands: If I told you that you had a choice to hear a story or listen to "preaching"—someone telling you how to live—how many would choose the preaching? The story?
- In most cases, people prefer a story to preaching. That's why many pastors today tell their gospel messages using a lot of stories. Why do you think people prefer a story to being preached to?
- **Let's read Matthew 25:31-46.** This is one of many parables, or stories, Jesus used to share spiritual truths. Why do you think Jesus used parables to teach? [**Point:** The parables revealed spiritual truths using things the Israelites were familiar with—farming, kings, etc.—making the lesson easier for the listeners to understand. When Jesus taught using stories, he was being innovative.]

Going Deeper

Scripture is the true story of a loving God coming among his creation. Those stories show us how God chose faithful individuals to become his leaders: Abraham, Moses, David, John the Baptist, the Apostles. Each of his chosen leaders had different personalities, but they all had several things in common: They were full of faith, had a servant's hearts, and were innovators in leading others into God's vision for the future.

Read Joshua 1:9: Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

- In each Bible story where there was challenge and victory, there was God, providing inspiration for his leaders to be innovators. How do you think Noah was an innovative leader? How about Joshua? How about Paul?

- Some of the challenges these biblical leaders faced had to seem overwhelming: commanding the Red Sea to part, marching around the wall of Jericho until the walls collapsed on their own, facing a giant with a sling shot and a smooth stone. But where did these innovators place their trust? [*Point:* They placed their trust in God.] In what specific ways can you learn to trust God to make you a worthy innovator and storyteller of his faithfulness?

Application

(Allow quiet time for team members to read and reflect.)

God is the ultimate storyteller. He shares his knowledge of the universe with us through his Word, the Bible. Those who want to be strong Servant Leaders for God need to know scripture well. They also can be better prepared to communicate God's truth and love if they have stories to share that demonstrate God's faithfulness. Your best story is the story of what God has done for you personally. Take some time now to pray and think about this story, and jot down an outline of that story. Set time aside later to finish your story of how God has blessed your life.

End the session with prayer.

Remind Your Team: Be sure to read today's journal reading "*Plenty of Chain,*" which looks at how we can become leaders who are innovative.

Day Five Morning

Becoming Passionate Leaders

Leader's Notes

Today's Objective: Team members will be able to describe what it means to be a passionate leader.

Begin by introducing today's theme: Yesterday we focused on how being innovative in ministering to other, including sharing our stories, makes us stronger Servant Leaders. Today we will examine the roll passion plays in effectively leading others into the fullness of life God intends for all people.

Group Discussion

(Ask participants to listen to the following verses and think about what is being said in terms of have passion for our work. Ask different participants to read the following scriptures aloud, and invite all to answer the questions following the scriptures:)

- **Ephesians 6:7:** Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women . . . How do you think that “rendering service to the Lord” can deepen our passion for ministry?
- Can passion be contagious? Can you think of a time when one person's passion lit passion in others? [Examples: Martin Luther King in influencing civil rights, Clara Barton in establishing the American Red Cross]
- **Hebrews 10:24** urges us to “consider how to provoke one another to love and good work.” In what specific ways can we share our passions and encourage others to join in loving and working for others?

Going Deeper

When we truly understand that God is working through us in ministry, we can't help but be passionate about our work. As we seek to build passion into our work, Jesus' life is an example of that passion. The gospels are clear that Jesus knew His purpose, His mission. John 12:44 says, “Then Jesus cried out, ‘When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.’”

Here Jesus is adamant that his followers know his purpose because he “cried out” or spoke in a loud voice. His purpose is two-fold: Jesus is a reflection of the Father to all humankind, and he is the light to the world that people should not live in darkness. Jesus knew his mission on earth and was passionate about that mission. We can also know our purpose, and knowing that purpose brings passion for what we were designed by the almighty God of the universe to do.

Leader's note: *Have students call out words they associate with passion, and suggest they write them down in their journal. Then direct them to the Application exercise that follows.*

Application

(Allow quiet time for team members to read and reflect.)

God is passionate about us, and he is passionate about the purposes he ordained for us. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future and a hope." We are called because it is God's purpose for us to do this work. Consider the words your group associated with passion. Knowing that God calls us to participate in his work, what ways can you make passion for that work real in your life?

End the session with prayer.

Remind Your Team: Be sure to read today's journal reading "***What is YOUR Passion?***" which looks at how passion grows in a life that has Christ at the center.

Day Six Morning

Becoming Trustworthy Leaders

Leader's Notes

Today's Objective: Team members will be able to define trustworthiness and explain how it is integral to servant leadership.

Begin by introducing today's theme: Yesterday we focused on how being passionate encourages others to become involved in God's work in the world. Today we will look at the critical role trustworthiness plays in servant leadership.

Group Discussion

Chelsey is a leader at Maple Vine High School. She had an idea to help people who are hungry, urging other students to volunteer at the local food bank. She set up a meeting between interested students and the person who oversees the food bank to let students see what they would be doing. During the meeting they talked about the needs of the poor in their own community. When the students left, they not only were ready to volunteer, they also had plans to organize a food and clothing drive in their school to collect essential items for people in need.

Erika is a leader at Seaside High School. She had an idea to help homeless people by asking other students to help serve food at a local shelter once a week. Erika asked only people she liked to join in the work. She explained that even though she "knew" a lot of the homeless people were lazy, working with homeless people would look good on the students' resumes. Erika set up a meeting between the student volunteers and the homeless shelter. But she had a chance to work extra hours at her after-school job, so Erika didn't show up at the meeting. When the students left the meeting, they were disappointed in Erika and weren't sure it was worth their time to volunteer at the shelter.

- Which of these students would you rather work with and why? [**Point:** Erika was not trustworthy because she "gossiped" about homeless people; she was doing the work for her own gain, not others; and she didn't show up when she said she would.]
- How would you define being trustworthy?

Going Deeper

Another word similar to "trustworthy" is "faithful." Any person is fallible, but we have a God who never fails. Jesus is our model for being trustworthy and faithful. We can place our trust in Him, and because of that faith experience, we know how to be faithful and trustworthy to others.

(Ask participants to listen to the following verses and think about what is being said about trustworthiness. Ask a different participant to read the following scriptures aloud, and invite all to answer the question that follows:)

1 Corinthians 1:9: God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.
May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of
our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

- God calls us to be faithful because he is faithful. As a Servant Leader, how specifically can you be faithful to God and to others?

Application

(Allow quiet time for team members to read and reflect.)

As we seek to reflect the faithfulness of Christ, we shine his light to those we encounter. How can you more intentionally be a light for Christ in all you do? Write your thoughts in your journal.

End the session with prayer.

Remind Your Team: Be sure to read today's journal reading "***A Delicate Balance***," which looks at how Christian leaders can bring God's perfect balance to the work we are called to do.