

**Outline of the class lessons: grades 4-7 (with practice, 45 minutes.)**

**Note:** Success depends upon enough group members adopting these ideas to shift the dynamics of their group's interactions. Help this happen by only attempting the lesson when it:

- 1) follows an empathy generating event, like our assembly program.**
- 2) is conducted for all classes of the same grade within the same day, and**
- 3) is presented by someone whom the students will consider a special speaker.**

**PART I Defining True Friendship**

- Brainstorm with students how they define friends and friendship (list on the board)
- Illustrate how “sticking with friends, *NO MATTER WHAT*” can be dangerous ... depending upon choices made by our friends (drugs, weapons, gangs, etc.)
- Ask what they'd do “if a friend were considering ...”  
Typical responses are that they'd help convince their friend otherwise.
- Emphasize their response above: that good friends, true friends, help/advise their friends to avoid mistakes - we'll come back to this in part three

**PART II A Break in the Tension (with use of prepared overhead transparencies or board)**

- “Active Listening” involves our full attention, our posture, our eye contact, and our thinking about the content and emotion of the speaker
- Practice listening in pairs, (show sample discussion topics, make pairings, time one minute to speak, listener restates for 15 -20 seconds.) Invite student comments. Typically, there will be mention of the good feelings when others actively listened to them. Reverse roles and repeat.
- Extrapolate as to how this could help them during periods of conflict, whether with parents or classmates.

**PART III Defining Leadership via Extreme Examples (diagram on board)**

- Briefly brainstorm names of famous world leaders (Bad and Good) of the past 100 years. The two most consistent names that kids provide are Hitler and Dr. M. L. King, and they serve this exercise well as archetypes of leadership. (hint: avoid USA presidents)
- Lead a discussion as to what Hitler did that earned his notoriety: he built power by blaming a minority group to gain favor within a majority group. He did it very effectively and gained great power, and caused great harm. Heussein and Milosevic, Stalin (and others whose names the kids provide) used similar techniques.
- Ask: Did Martin Luther King (and Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Einstein, Schweitzer, Susan B. Anthony, Sadat, or Mandella) gain fame for separating people? No! They're known for speaking in ways to bring people face to face with moral principles, and in the process bringing people together to solve common issues.

**Part IV Conclusion: Linking Leadership to Friendship**

- Looking to the schoolyard: HOW DO OUR FRIENDS/CLASSMATES BEHAVE?
- Ask if any of the popular kids “sometimes, maybe, try to build themselves up by putting others down.” ... soften the next statement by pointing out that “these same kids are learning math, learning science, and if it is their personality to want the attention of leadership, they are learning how to lead... STILL, AT THE TIME THEY PUT OTHERS DOWN, WHICH TYPE OF LEADER ARE THEY LEARNING TO BECOME?”
- IS THAT IN THEIR BEST INTEREST FOR A FUTURE?
- Returning to their earlier assertions and using their new view of leaders: REAL FRIENDS WILL ONLY SUPPORT RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR within their circle of friends.
- NOT EVERYONE VIEWS THEMSELVES AS A LEADER, BUT...IF WE EACH ACT AS TRUE FRIENDS, OUR CLASS AND SCHOOL WILL BE A FRIENDLIER, SAFER PLACE.

Teachers and staff need to nurture these ideas. The first students to try are more vulnerable to peer criticism.