

Elementary  
Leadership  
Team

Developing Young Church  
Leaders in Children's Ministry

By Anne Bosarge

ELT-  
Elementary  
Leadership Team

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## ***Introduction: Small Kids - Big Influence***

*1 Timothy 4:12, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity."*

Imagine what would happen if you had a team of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders who were ready to step up to the next level in their spiritual journey. Instead of just sitting in children's ministry on Sunday mornings, they want to serve. Instead of simply being poured into, they want to begin giving back.

I'm fortunate to have the pleasure of spending time with my Elementary Leadership Team twice a month and it's simply one of my favorite things to do. It's true- they're immature, they act like kids, from time to time they laugh when it may not be appropriate, and after playing games they have a distinct "5<sup>th</sup> grade boy smell". BUT these kids are striving to be world changers in their homes, neighborhoods, and community. We have memorized 1 Timothy 4:12 and constantly have check-ups to make sure that they are living out the five areas of influence mentioned in the verse. They really believe their actions and lives can make a difference. They truly believe they can set an example not only for those who are younger, but also adults who cross their paths. Know why they believe it? Because God says they can and our adult leaders tell them they can. These are the ways my elementary leadership team sets an example for ALL believers:

### **Speech**

I will listen and will not interrupt.  
I will use encouraging words that show honor and respect.

### **Life**

My life will reflect God's love for me.  
I will be a leader who cares about others more than myself.

### **Love**

I will be kind.  
I will reach out to others who don't have friends.

### **Faith**

I will share my faith with others.  
I will live out my faith every day as I put actions to my words.

### **Purity**

I will make wise choices in what I watch, see, and hear.  
I will fill my mind with God's Word.

They live it out in their lives at home, at school and in our elementary worship service. On a Sunday morning, our ELT can be seen running tech, adjusting the sound volume, assisting adult small group leaders, running our reward store, leading worship on the stage, distributing supplies, and more.

The lessons that follow are the first step in developing leadership characteristics in your 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Below are some implementation suggestions for beginning your own ELT program.

- 1 Scheduling- Our ELT (Elementary Leadership Team) is an optional group that meets twice a month outside our regularly scheduled Sunday programming. We meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of each month from 4:30-6:00. Please note that making this a mandatory program for your 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders will dilute its effectiveness. Not all kids are ready for this type of responsibility! Because of the nature of this group and its level of responsibility, kids who are not ready, usually weed themselves out during the first couple of months.
- 2 Programming- The lessons that follow are meant to challenge kids in their faith and teach basic leadership characteristics in fun, exciting ways. You'll play gross, crazy games that make parents cringe and get kids digging into their Bibles. In addition to the lessons, make sure you allow kids time to hang out and develop a sense of community. Our ELT meetings usually include 15 minutes of "hang out" time, 45 minutes for the lesson, and we use the rest of the time to practice music and motions for the following week's elementary worship experience. Any leftover time is spent with more team-building and fun.
- 3 Expectations- It's important to make your behavior expectations very clear from the beginning. In the third meeting, kids and parents will sign a commitment form and pledge stating what is expected of them. State your expectations of how your leadership team should behave during your Sunday experiences. Their behavior and actions should set the example for the rest of the kids in the room.
- 4 Responsibilities- My ELT kids are responsible for running the media and tech during our Sunday elementary and preschool environments, giving out points for games, running our rewards store, leading music and motions on the stage, and so much more! Decide what areas of responsibility you are comfortable entrusting into the hands of your trained ELT. Don't sell their abilities short! They are far more capable than you can imagine!

- 5 Rewards- Reward your leadership team for a job well done! A reward can be more free time to hang out, a piece of candy during the lesson, a game of kickball where you participate, allowing kids to choose their favorite songs to do for fun, etc. Simple rewards like a special name badge and t-shirt for all the kids on your leadership team go a long way and mean a lot to kids. It gives them a sense of identity and makes them feel important.
- 6 Instill Ownership- Give kids a sense of ownership in your Sunday morning experiences. When you have a successful Sunday morning, give them praise! Allow them to see that their hard work makes your environment a better place.
- 7 Send it Home- Encourage parents to continue to reinforce the concepts they're learning at your ELT meetings when they get home. In the first week, kids will be given two homework cards held together with a circle ring binder. They will be asked to complete the two cards at home before the next ELT meeting. These homework cards provide kids with the opportunity to extend what they've learned at their meetings and let parents see what the kids have been learning. Ask kids to return the completed cards the following week. Consider implementing a points system that gives kids the chance to earn rewards for completed cards.

## ***Lesson 1- Getting in Shape to Serve***

**Materials:** five poster boards with leadership characteristics as described below, Bibles, rope that has been tied together to make a loop, homework cards

**Leaders Are...**- What does it mean to be a leader? Let's play a game that will help us think about what leadership looks like. I'm going to call out five descriptions of a leader. If you think the first description I say describes a leader, you'll stand on the right side of the room. If you think the second description I say describes a leader, you'll stand on the left side. Please listen to the whole description before you move!

A leader is...	in front	behind
A leader...	helps	gives directions
A leader...	sets the example	follows others
A leader...	puts others first	takes the lead
A leader...	speaks	listens

Did you have a hard time choosing from these two options? Lots of people think that leaders are out in front, telling people what to do and leading the way. We're going to learn that God wants you to be a servant leader. That means that you lead others by serving- not by being served. Let's look at those descriptions again and talk about them.

A leader is often out in front showing others the way, but sometimes must walk behind and give others the freedom to experience leadership.

A leader often needs to give directions and guide people, but also needs to be willing to help others.

A leader should set the example for others to follow, but also be willing to follow the ideas and suggestions of others.

A leader should take the lead when necessary, but be willing to put others needs first at all times.

A leader should speak up when needed, but know that it's just as important to listen to others.

**Look It Up-** 1 Timothy 4:12 tells us what it means to be a Christian leader. Look up 1 Timothy 4:12 in the Bible and see if you can identify the five areas that Timothy calls us to be leaders. (Life, Love, Speech, Faith, Purity)

I have five posters hung up around the room. They have the five areas of leadership written on them along with a definition of each one. I'm going to give each pair of you five post-it notes and I want you to work with a partner to write one thing on each post-it note that a leader would do to demonstrate leadership in each of these categories. Here is an example: If I write

on my post-it note, “speak encouraging words” which poster should it go on? What about if I write, “only watch G and PG movies?”

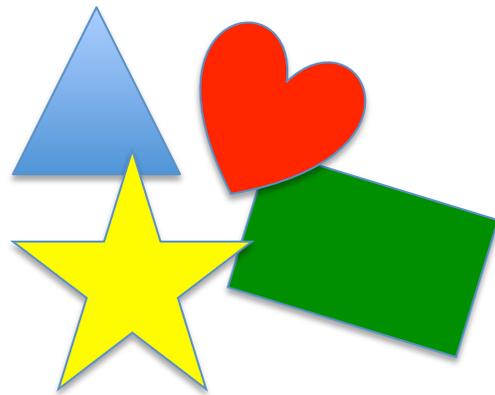
Definitions-

- Speech- Allow your words to speak life to others.
- Life- Live a life that reflects God.
- Love- Love God and Love Others.
- Faith- Grow and Learn.
- Purity- Allow only Godly influences in your life.

**Make a Shape-** We’re going to see if you can put to use what you’ve learned today about being a leader. We’re going to play, “Make a Shape.” I’m going to give you a piece of string that has been tied together to create a loop. Everyone needs to spread out along the edge of the circle and grab the string. I’ll call out a shape and you will need to work together to make the shape that I call out. Because we have lots of leaders in this group, you’ll have to know when to speak and when to listen. You’ll need to use your words to encourage others and demonstrate a loving attitude to others.

Shapes to call out:

- Triangle
- Rectangle
- Flower
- Tree
- Star
- Heart



**Talk It Over-** Why is it important for Christian leaders to be an example for others? How can you be a servant and a leader at the same time?

Each week you’re going to be given two take-home cards that we’ll store on a circle ring binder. You’ll need to complete the assignments and bring them back the next time we meet. Each week we’ll add the next week’s homework cards to the ring binder. At the end of our leadership series, you’ll have a collection of cards that demonstrate what Christian leadership is all about.

## ***Lesson 2- Got a Gift***

**Materials-** Bibles, Timothy's Gifts reproducible- one per child, "Your Gifts" reproducible- one per child, pledge ceremony letter- one per child, homework cards

**As kids come in-** Ask kids to recite 1 Timothy 4:12 to a leader. Collect their homework cards from last week and initial them.

**Hidden Talents Show-** Do you have any special talents? What are they? Today we're going to have a surprise talent show! You're going to work with a group to come up with something to perform in our talent show. You can do a dance, sing a song, read a poem you write, perform a one minute skit, anything you want! I'll give you 10 minutes to prepare with your group. You can use anything in the room in your performance!

After 10 minutes have passed, allow kids to perform their special talent.

What are some things you're good at? Why do you think God gave you the ability to do these things?

**Timothy's Gifts-** Last week we learned 1 Timothy 4:12. Can you recite that verse with me? "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity." Paul, one of the greatest missionaries of all times, wrote this in a letter to Timothy. Let's see if we can learn a little bit more about Timothy to see if we can understand this verse a little better.

You'll need to work with a partner and look up the verses (page 11). Write down facts that you learn about Timothy from these verses.

Who is he? (Paul's son in the faith)

What was his job? (to teach truths to the other Christians)

How was he to teach them? (by his actions- speech, life, love, faith, purity)

What kind of weaknesses did he have? (frequent illnesses- possibly brought on by contaminated water)

What did Paul tell Timothy to be instead of timid? (full of God's power, love, and self-discipline)

What kind of family did Timothy come from? (His faith was taught to him by his mother and grandmother)

So we know that Timothy was a young pastor, not in the best of health, and probably kind of timid- not really brave when standing up to people who might be doing the wrong thing. Does he sound like a natural leader? He doesn't, does he? Did you know that God can take all your strengths and your weaknesses and turn you into an amazing leader who will bring Him glory!

**Your Gifts-** Let's see if we can identify some of the things that you already do well that God can use to help you lead others and bring them closer to Him. I want you to work quietly by yourself

to take a quiz. If you need help with the words or reading, please let me know and I'll help you. When you are done, circle the category that has the most check marks.

Compare the results from the tests and discuss each child's strengths. As you review each area, have them stand up if they circled that area as one of their strengths.

**Prophecy-** Someone with the gift of prophecy is able to understand God's truths and help guide others in the right way. They are sensitive to the difference between right and wrong.

**Serving-** This person sees what needs to be done and does it without whining, moaning, or complaining. He puts the needs of others first and is on the lookout for ways to help.

**Teaching-** Someone with the gift of teaching loves to learn about God through study and is able to explain what he has learned to others.

**Encouragement-** An encourager is a person who is able to lift others up when they feel down and is enjoyable to be around because they have a positive outlook on life.

**Giving-** This person sees a need and fills it- regardless of what it costs. Givers are generous and sharing- and they go out of their way to make sure others have what they need.

**Leadership-** Someone with the gift of leadership is organized and responsible. They will not put off doing something- you can count on them to do it on time and do it correctly the first time.

**Compassion-** A compassionate person is one who demonstrates mercy to others, who can see someone else's point of view, and is extremely loving and caring.

**Talk It Over-** Why is it helpful to know your spiritual gifts? How can you use these gifts to serve others at church? At home? At school?

Remember! Next time we meet, please make sure your parents make plans to attend the pledge signing ceremony. We'll go over the five important areas of leadership for ELT and hear from our pastors about what it means to be a servant leader in the church. This is a dress-up event! Wear something nice and bring your parents. I'm asking everyone to bring some finger foods and we'll enjoy some good munchies after the ceremony.

This week in your homework, you'll explore your strengths and weaknesses and think about how you can use your gifts in leadership at home, school, and church. (Distribute the Pledge Ceremony letter to parents as the kids are picked up.)

## *Timothy's Gifts*

Who is he? Read 1 Timothy 1:1-2.

What was his job? Read 1 Timothy 4:11.

How was he to teach them? Read 1 Timothy 4:12.

What kind of weaknesses did he have? Read 1 Timothy 5:23.

What did Paul tell Timothy to be instead of timid? Read 2 Timothy 1:7.

What kind of family did Timothy come from? Read 2 Timothy 1:5.



## *Your Gifts*

*Put a check mark in front of the lines that best describe you.*

### **Prophecy-**

- I can tell the difference between right and wrong, good and evil.
- I am not afraid to speak my mind.
- I tend to think about the negative first.
- I feel that I'm right most of the time.
- I get angry when people break the rules and get away with it.
- I can be stubborn.
- I want to be obedient and feel guilty when I don't obey.

### **Serving-**

- I like working with my hands.
- I enjoy helping others.
- I am usually shy and get embarrassed easily.
- I put others' needs before my own.
- I keep my room clean and organized.
- It's hard to say no when people ask for my help.
- I like doing projects for other people.

### **Teaching-**

- I love to learn new things.
- I like teaching people what I've learned.
- It's easy for me to explain things to others.
- I have strong opinions about things.
- I like telling stories.
- I am independent and do things on my own.
- I think I know more than many of my friends.

**Encouragement-**

- I love to talk all the time.
- I am happy most of the time.
- I like to tell people when they've done a good job.
- I have a positive outlook on life.
- I notice when someone does something good and I tell them.
- I like helping people solve their problems.
- I get along with lots of different types of people.

**Giving-**

- Giving to others makes me happy.
- I do everything with all my heart.
- I enjoy using my imagination.
- I don't have lots of friends, just a few best friends.
- I like to save money rather than spend it.
- I am good at making money.
- I'm quick to help others when I see they have a need.

**Leadership-**

- I feel very satisfied when I accomplish something.
- I love competition. I like to be the first or the best.
- It's important to me that my friends are loyal.
- I enjoy showing others what to do.
- I'm good at speaking up in class.
- I feel good about myself and the things I can do.
- I'm usually in charge when I'm in a group.

**Compassion-**

- I get upset when bad things happen to people.
- I look for the good things about people.
- I enjoy showing love to someone who is hurting.
- I am eager to please other people.
- I enjoy peace and try to avoid arguing with others.
- I find it hard to stand up for myself.
- I like playing sports and games that don't have a winner.

***ELT Pledge Signing  
Event!  
Date, Time***



Dear Parents,

We have been learning basic leadership principles outlined in 1 Timothy 4:12. This year in ELT, your kids will be held accountable for their choices and behavior as they strive to be the leaders God is calling them to be. On (date), we'll have a special Pledge signing ceremony at (place). Kids will sign a pledge committing to be held accountable in five areas: speech, life, love, faith, and purity. In order to make this a special and meaningful event, we've asked that kids get a little dressed up. After the ceremony we'll celebrate with a reception. Thanks for helping your child grow in faith and character this year by being a part of ELT!

Sincerely,