

1 – THE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER (CHAPTER 4)

Overview Statement: Professionalism is not the job you do, but how you do it. When the United States Air Force needs to train new recruits, they turn to the non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps. The Air Force's NCOs are experts at professionalism, a trait that CAP models in its cadet corps.

Connection to the Curriculum: Ties in with a central theme of chapter four in *Learn to Lead*, Team Leadership.

Estimated Time: 25-30 Minutes

Resources Required: *Learn to Lead*, Module Two; Whiteboard (or chalkboard, butcher paper or easel pad).

Key Terms:

Professionalism – “The skill, competence, or character expected of a member of a highly trained profession.” Encarta Dictionary

Non-Commissioned Officer – “Leadership by example.” *Learn to Lead*, Module Two

INTRODUCTION

Attention: How would you define, “professionalism?”

Motivation: In the United States Air Force, the non-commissioned officers, or NCOs, have a responsibility in caring for more than self. A new cadet NCO needs to learn how to transition from being cared for to one who cares for others.

Overview: In this lesson we will learn about the role of the non-commissioned officer and describe how professionalism is important in leading others.

Your role in this discussion is to be an active participant. You are free to share your views with each other. Please be involved and considerate of one another. My role will be to take notes on what you say, and I may occasionally ask a question or two. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am simply interested in what you have to say.

MAIN POINT 1: IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONALISM

A leader is a professional. A leader strives to conduct him/herself with a special quality called professionalism. A professional is someone who has special skills. Professionals have a habit of putting the community's interests above their own. Professionals hold themselves and their peers to an ethical code.

Question: Why is putting others' interests first important?

Question: How do CAP's Core Values relate to professionalism? Give some examples.

Question: Why is the leader's example the most important standard of all?

MAIN POINT 2: THE ROLE OF THE NCO

{Write on the board CAP's Core Values: Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence and Respect.}

The cadet NCO epitomizes CAP's Core Values. They guide, instruct and mentor other cadets. They support the leader and reward their followers. They counsel others even as they continue to learn themselves. The NCOs are the first-line supervisors charged with demonstrating superb military bearing. The NCOs are technically, physically and mentally ready to accomplish the mission.

Question: How can a cadet NCO demonstrate support for his or her leader?

Question: Why is physical readiness important for an NCO?

Question: How would you define military bearing?

CONCLUSION

Summary: Because a leader's first duty is to accomplish the mission, the NCO steps in and corrects cadets in a helpful way. Not only do leaders keep their people safe, they make sure everyone in the team watches out for safety, too. "Always Vigilant" is CAP's motto for a reason.

Remotivation: Cadet NCOs are the backbone of CAP's national training program. Now that you are a cadet non-commissioned officer, you stand as a professional example, both personally and while leading others.

Closure: Lead by example!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Note to the instructor: Every informal discussion should be followed by one or more hands-on activities that reinforce one or more of the concepts being discussed. These activities should last 25-30 minutes, giving about one hour total block of time for the leadership session at a typical CAP meeting (25-30 minutes for the informal discussion, plus 25-30 minutes for the activities).

Along with any questions found in the activities themselves, you should be sure to ask, “**How does this activity tie in with our discussion?**”

CAP recommends activities from the *Learn to Lead Activity Guide* by Rob Smith (published by the Civil Air Patrol). You are free to substitute another activity, or create your own, as long as you tie in with one or more concepts of the informal discussion.

Main concepts for this lesson: **Professionalism; taking care of others.**