

Lesson 3b

Leadership at the Movies: "Miracle"

This lesson introduces the students to the trait theory of leadership by using the film *Miracle*. Use either this lesson or lesson 3a, "Invictus," but not both.

Overall Goal

Students will identify and describe traits of positive, successful leaders.

Objectives

1. Watch carefully leadership traits on display in scenes from *Miracle*.
2. Identify and describe leadership traits demonstrated by the main character.
3. Explain why a team's performance can affect the larger institution, be it a school or a nation.

A/V Support

A cadet will be needed to cue the videos and manage the DVD player. This cadet should be someone other than the instructor.

Lesson Outline

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| 1. Attention / Viewing: The Right Man for the Job | 4 min |
| 2. Background Information About the 1980 US Olympic Hockey Team | 2 min |
| 3. Viewing: Coach Brooks Goes Ballistic | 3 min |
| 4. Discussion Questions | 6 min |
| 5. Viewing: Coach Brooks Dismisses a Player | 2 min |
| 6. Discussion Questions | 5 min |
| 7. Take-Aways | 5 min |
| a. We can identify leaders by the traits they display. | |
| b. Leadership by example is the foundation of leadership. | |
| c. Young people can develop the same traits Coach Brooks displayed | |
| 8. Conclusion | 1 min |

Estimated Duration 28 - 35 min

LESSON PLAN

Attention: "The Right Man for the Job"

Show Miracle 3:56 to 6:10 from where Kurt Russell interviews for the job of head coach, until the end of the interviewers' questions. Following the clip, cue the film to 1:24:05 for the next scene to be discussed.

1. What are some of the leadership traits we see here in Coach Brooks, played by Kurt Russell?

Innovation Willing to try a totally new approach to selecting, training, and playing hockey.

Honesty Brooks doesn't try to weasel into the job, he speaks his mind politely but frankly and presents his philosophy as honestly as possible.

Preparation Clearly Coach Brooks has come to this interview having already invested a great deal of thought into where the hockey program needs to go.

Background Information About the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team

In 1979-80, as the U.S. Hockey Team was preparing for the 1980 Olympics, the United States was facing what President Carter called a "crisis of confidence."

The economy was terrible. People were losing their homes and their jobs. As a nation, we felt we had lost, or at least not won, our most recent war, Vietnam. If you wanted to fill-up your car with gas, you'd have to go only on certain days and wait in very long lines. President Richard Nixon had quit the White House in disgrace. Worst of all, Iranian revolutionaries stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and captured 52 Americans, holding them hostage for 444 days. We dispatched soldiers to try to free the hostages, but the mission failed, killing 8 of our troops. It seemed that the 1970s were one disaster after another for the United States. The struggles of the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team take place against this backdrop of pessimism.

Set-Up: Coach Brooks Goes Ballistic

In this next scene, Herb Brooks, played by Kurt Russell, has become head coach and we're already through our hockey practices and into the Olympics itself. Despite working his team hard, they just aren't coming together. They lack that spark, that something extra that can lead them to achieve.

Show Miracle from 1:24:05 to 1:25:34, from where Kurt Russell enters the locker room until Noah Emmerich says he'll clean up. Following the clip, cue the film to 1:08:00 for the next discussion.

Discussion Questions: Coach Brooks Goes Ballistic

1. What does "motivation" mean? Why is motivation important for members of a team?
2. Motivation is the reason for an action. Motivation is your "why," it's why you choose to do something.

Note: Motivation is different from talent. The world is full of talented people who never reached their potential.

3. What are some leadership traits we see here in Coach Brooks?

Challenge Boy, does he challenge his players! He pushes them to play through injury and do better than they think is their best.

Directness Coach Brooks does not mince words, he speaks plainly and directly. There's no second-guessing what he's trying to tell you.

Enthusiasm By tossing the table, Coach Brooks showed a flair for the dramatic, a communications technique for getting his team to pay attention.

Focus In Coach Brooks' mind, winning matters. Reaching your potential is a means toward that end, but overall, winning is the goal. He's focused on winning.

Drug-Free Although drug-use never comes up, we get the impression that Coach Brooks would never tolerate drugs - they could only hurt his team and even disqualify them from the Olympics.

4. Would you have taken the same approach that Coach Brooks did? Why or why not?

Suggested Reply: Let's hope not!

First, Coach Brooks is a highly-experienced leader who knows what he's doing. You saw that fact acknowledged when the assistant coach's eyes lit-up and he said, "I'll clean up."

Second, Coach Brooks' extreme actions are offered up in an extreme setting - the Olympics. Middle school students face challenges, no doubt, but middle school games, club meetings, and student councils are not the Olympics.

Third, as young new leaders, one of your main jobs is learning how to deal with people in a polite, respectful way. The heavy-handed approach simply isn't right for you, or for your team mates.

Set-Up: Coach Brooks Dismisses a Player

Is Coach Brooks always so aggressive as a leader? In this next scene, you'll see him take an entirely different approach to the leadership challenge.

Show Miracle from 1:08:00 to 1:10:20, the totality of the scene where Kurt Russell has to dismiss one of his players.

Discussion Questions: Coach Brooks Dismisses a Player

1. What happened to Coach Brooks, the table-throwing, screaming, in-your-face coach from the previous scene?

Suggested Reply: Coach Brooks is the same man he always was. Only the situation has changed. Coach Brooks shows that when the need arises, he can be a loud, aggressive leader. He can also be a caring, supportive leader if that is what the situation calls for.

2. What leadership traits do we see on display here in Coach Brooks?

Suggested Reply:

<i>Respect</i>	Coach Brooks shows respect for his player. He knows this news is disappointing, and shows that he understands how tough it is. He doesn't belittle his player, but thanks him for giving his very best.
<i>Decisive</i>	Coach Brooks had to cut one player, but he debated that decision before the meeting, not during it. He was decisive. His clear decision allowed the player to move on with his life, versus trying to weasel out of the tough decision and leaving room for hope that wasn't really there, false hope that would have left the poor player hanging.
<i>Team-Focus</i>	Some people delay making the tough decisions, but Coach Brooks did not. He had a team-focus. That is, he knew the team as a whole needed to move on and get ready for the Olympics. If Coach Brooks had prolonged the decision to cut this player, he would've been harming the team's ability to focus for the long-term.
<i>Drug-Free</i>	Again, drug use does not come up directly, but it's worth noting that Coach Brooks and his player face their challenges head-on, and don't indicate in any way that they'll turn to drugs to escape their problems.

3. How would you want a leader to treat you if you were getting bad news?

4. Would you be okay with how Coach Brooks treated this player if you were being cut from the team?

Take-Aways

Miracle looks like a good movie, but so what? So what? What can we take-away from this movie to help us become better leaders?

Suggested Reply:

We can identify leaders by the traits they display.

Leadership by example is the foundation of leadership.

Young people can develop the same traits Coach Brooks displayed.

Conclusion

If you gave 110% everyday, all the time, Coach Brooks would love and respect you. But if you gave 99%, he'd be furious. Coach Brooks believed that you can't really perform in life unless you give 110%. Moreover, he believed that we often think we're giving 110% when in actuality, we're still holding back. You really have to push yourself to reach your fullest potential. Of course, saying no to drugs is something you just have to do to fulfill your potential.

As middle schoolers, you might not have the same challenges as Coach Brooks, but you can try to develop some of the same leadership skills.