

GIFTS: Great Ideas for Teaching Servant-Leadership

*A project of the Center for Spirituality & Leadership
at Marian University, Wisconsin*

Activity Title: Apollo 13; The Question of Effective Leadership

Group Size: varies

Time Needed: Set up time 10 minutes
Film run 140 minutes
Debrief @45 minutes

Servant-Leadership Attribute addressed:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching and mentoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community building | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating collaboration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foresight and vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Fostering growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating creativity |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <i>Understanding effective leadership</i> _____ | |

Objectives / Goals / Purpose of the activity:

To consider how the characteristics of effective leadership by applying them to an example of crisis management in the incident of Apollo 13.

Materials Needed:

Copy of film, copies of handouts and discussion guide

Directions for the Activity:

- Depending upon how you utilize the activity, you will need to discuss the characteristics of effective leadership first. I use this as part of an introductory course in leadership with undergraduates.
- Watch the film (this will take some time)
- Use the film guide and discussion questions to discuss the film and “tease out” examples of effective (and ineffective) leadership

Questions or Process for Debriefing the Activity:

- Who do you perceive to be leaders in the events surrounding Apollo 13?
- What characteristics / behaviors contribute to your thinking?
- Why do others follow these individuals?
- Would you say these individuals lead with soul? Who act as servant leaders?

Describe when the activity is best utilized:

- I use the film review about mid-way through the traditional, semester-long course as a way to apply the elements of effective leadership
- The film could also be used as part of a week-long or weekend-long retreat situation as both an entertainment option as well as a discussion of effective leadership

Variations and/or Helpful Hints:

- There are other uses of *Apollo 13* that focus on crisis management. I believe there are other equally helpful ways to use the film.
- If time is unavailable to view the entire film, certain clips can be used
 - A group of engineers is asked to determine how best to get the astronauts back to earth
 - A group of engineers wrestles with the question of rebooting the computers without using excessive amounts of energy
 - A group of engineers grapples with making an air filter
 - The families gather under the leadership of Marilyn Lovell to support one another
- Students could be asked to view the film on their own and either be prepared to discuss the film in class and/or write the essay without discussion. I find that group discussion is quite important however with this assignment.
- Consider using the film as part of an online assignment if teaching in an all online or hybrid format. Discussion boards or live chat could substitute for in-class, face-to-face discussion

Submitted by:

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