



Hello!

If you are reading this, you have been involved in *campus RENEW* and are about to undertake a special task—helping other leaders to become familiar with both the workings of *campus RENEW* and how to lead a small community. The attached material is your guide; it can be used as-is or adapted into your own words and/or time constraints.

On the following pages, you will find:

- Introductions
- Ice Breaker (God is more like...)
- Campus RENEW & small community introductory material
- Servant Leadership
- Leading the Group
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 - Helpful Hints for Small Community Leaders
 - Leadership Notes

Thank you for helping to continue *campus RENEW* on your campus! Without your involvement, small communities could not continue to grow.

New Leader Workshop

Welcome! This workshop was created for you, the Core Community, to orient the new leaders to the process of campus RENEW and to assist them in leading small communities. The following is a template for this workshop, which includes introductions, background, and leadership skills. Information in italics is for the person(s) leading the workshop. This workshop can be given by reading the material in regular font and following the directions given in italics. Or, you as a core community can use your own creativity within any/all of these sections. You may wish to plan a prayer service of commissioning to conclude this workshop—it may be possible to hold the workshop prior to a regularly scheduled Mass and to commission the new leaders in the course of the Mass.

Introductions

Introductions give people the opportunity to get to know and feel comfortable with one another. They are usually accompanied by an “ice breaker.” True to its name, ice breakers dissipate the tension in the room by inviting students to engage in a lighthearted, sometimes silly activity. You can use the one suggested, or create your own.

Welcome and thank you for your willingness to be a small community leader. It takes many people for our small communities to function—you are an integral part of the process. Tonight we will spend a little time getting to know the campus RENEW process and a bit more time working on our leadership skills.

But, first, let's introduce ourselves with your name, where you live, what activities you are involved with on campus, and what your experience has been with small communities (campus RENEW and otherwise).

My name is...

I live...

When I'm not studying or sleeping, I...

I've been involved with small communities since... because...

Icebreaker

Sometimes it is helpful to think of things in a new way in order to solidify what we think, so, we're going to do an activity to get our brains and bodies moving. For this activity, everyone needs to stand up and, when I give two options for what God is like, move to the side that is more appealing to you. We know that God is much greater than any description we could give, but, for this activity, you will need to answer one way or the other—no “middle ground” is available. So here goes.

Is God more like a tree or a meadow?

(Indicate one side of the room for each option. After everyone self-selects, ask for a couple of representatives from each side to share why they chose that image.)

Is God more like a cathedral or a sellout crowd?

(Again, indicate one side of the room for each option. Ask a few people to share why they chose that image.)

Is God more like a rock concert or a poetry reading?

(Directions as before—you may want to ask those who have not yet responded to share their responses.)

Is God more like autumn or spring?

(Directions as before.)

As soon as the group seems ready to go on, thank everyone for participating and have them return to their seats. Some other possible combinations are: Diamond or Starry Sky; Porsche or Prius; Ant or Elephant; Computer or Pen & Paper; ... feel free to create your own.

Lead the group in a short discussion about the activity:

What did you find most interesting about this activity?

Did you learn anything about yourself? What?

What surprised you about others' responses? Why?

Part of being a good small community leader is being sensitive to the differences in people and the differing points of view that may be expressed. I'm always amazed that someone can present a view—that I had trouble even seeing as plausible in the beginning—in such a way that I want to move to their side *(give an example)*. Faith-sharing is like that. There is no right or wrong in faith-sharing; it is people gathering to share their own faith and listen to others sharing their faith. Everyone who participates can grow from sharing their faith and by reflecting on the sharing of others.

Part I: What is campus RENEW? Why small communities?

This section introduces new leaders to small communities and their importance, as well as the particular way that they are implemented on your campus through campus RENEW. Feel free to use your own definition of small communities and/or campus RENEW. We have offered some suggestions below.

Why Small Communities?

Why are we spending time and energy to gather people into “small communities?”

People have gathered in groups for mutual support and protection since the days of living in caves, so, as humans we are “wired” for being part of groups. Jesus gathered disciples—a small band of women and men—to spread his message. Christians gathered in homes in the early days of the faith. Today, our faith community and college community have gotten so big that we can “disappear” in them, so, small communities offer us a chance to gather, share, grow, and reach out in faith together.

What is campus RENEW?

Campus RENEW is the name for our program of small communities here at *(name of school or campus ministry)*. We are not the only ones who use campus RENEW—it is in use at other colleges and universities around the country. We have been using this process for about *(length of time)* with good results, in fact, we need you as leaders because of the number of groups here on campus. You have already been involved in a small community, so, you have an idea of what campus RENEW looks like from that

angle. We're going to give you a broader view of the process so you can see the larger picture as a small community leader.

The idea behind campus RENEW is that our campus community can become “a community of smaller communities.” By connecting with others in a small group, we get to know ourselves, others, and God better. As our small groups become more important to us, we can begin to feel more welcome in the larger community—which is made up of those in small communities. Over time, we may become more involved and active members of our common faith community, or, at the very least, more reflective about our own lives and actions. In our small community, we challenge each other by sharing our own experiences of faith and reflecting on our own and others' experience.

What is RENEW?

RENEW International is a small organization headquartered in New Jersey which works within the Catholic Church. It has been involved in helping people form small Christian communities in parishes for over 25 years. Campus RENEW is one part of RENEW International; the materials we use in our small communities are created by RENEW for the campus RENEW process—they are written specifically for use **with students on campuses**. RENEW also creates processes and materials for programs such as Why Catholic?, which is based on the catechism; Theology on Tap for Catholics in their 20s and 30s, single or married; and other materials for use by parishes and small Christian communities all over the world.

Why on our campus?

This all leads to the question of “why do we have campus RENEW here at *(name of campus ministry/campus)?*”

(Give a short witness of why you are involved in a small community and in leadership of campus RENEW using the suggestions below as a guide of what to cover.)

Personally, I have been involved in a small community for...
because...

and it has helped me to...

So, that's why I've chosen to be part of campus RENEW.

(Lead a short discussion using the following or similar questions or break into smaller groups to discuss (if group is very large).)

Why did you get involved in a small community?

How has being in a small community made a difference for you?

What is it like to be asked to be a small community leader?

Why did you say yes to leading a small community?

(You may also want to have someone talk about the specifics of why campus RENEW is on your campus—perhaps a member of the Campus Ministry Staff could do this.)

[BREAK—10 minute break, if needed]

Part II: Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership

This part of the presentation focuses on skills for leadership. It is important, first and foremost, to lay the groundwork for Christian leadership. The first part of this section explores the traits of servant leadership. Look over this section in light of your own experience. What you would emphasize and/or add to this list? The second part of this section suggests exercises to practice skills for leadership. Again, think back to your own experience. Use the exercises that you found most helpful, and/or create your own exercises (and be sure to tell us about them, if you do!)

We're now going to move into the second part of our presentation—leading small communities. During the rest of our time, we will be talking about things that will be helpful when leading your group and we will practice a few skills for leading. All of you are here because someone recognized that you would be a good leader; what we're doing is brushing up things you may already know.

Let's talk about good leaders. Think of someone you consider to be a good leader—someone who has been a leader in your life. Who is this person? Why is this person a good leader in your eyes? What traits/qualities does this person possess that make her/him a good leader? How does this person exercise leadership? What can you/have you learned about leadership from this person?

(Lead a short discussion about people's answers.)

All of the people you mentioned are great examples of leadership. There is a leader who embodied all of the best aspects of a type of leadership called “servant leadership”—that leader is Jesus. One of the best images of Jesus as a servant leader is the story of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper. It's hard to think about washing the dirty feet of your friends who look up to you. Interestingly, one of the most honored titles for the Pope is “Servant of the Servants of God”—this indicates the importance of the image of leaders as servants. This all sounds pretty intimidating, but, we can learn a lot about leading by looking at the traits of a servant leader: love; vision; authenticity & compassion; inclusiveness; empowerment; exercising forgiveness; and listening. For our purposes, servant leadership can be described as leading for the good of the person being led.

Love

Servant leadership is based on love—truly loving and caring about the people you are leading. St. Augustine said: “Love, and do what you will.” This sounds like a free pass to do what you want, but, it is actually quite a challenge. If you truly love your group members, you will want to do what is best for the members of your small community. You might find it helpful to spend some time in prayer with St. Augustine's quote as you look toward leading. “Love, and do what you will.” These words from the 4th century still carry a lot of wisdom. The implications can be quite powerful if you let yourself really consider it.

Creates a Vision

A servant leader has a vision and works to bring that vision about. Jesus worked to bring about a more loving response to each other and the world. Creating a vision, however, is not about pounding that vision into people's heads. Creating a vision is about living in such a way that, by your example, you invite people to participate in this vision. Our vision for campus RENEW is for each person to, through the small

community, encounter God, and discover how God is working in their lives. This vision doesn't lead each person to the same place, rather, it challenges everyone to find out to what she/he is drawn or how to best respond to his/her faith in her/his own life.

Authentic & Compassionate

A servant leader is "real." A servant leader represents herself/himself honestly and genuinely. Are servant leaders perfect? No, but, they do the best they can to be honest with themselves and others and are committed to continued growth. Compassion is also a trait of a servant leader. Some confuse compassion with sympathy—feeling sorry for someone. Compassion means "feeling with" someone and standing by them in their experience. Jesus often showed compassion for those who were marginalized by society—by eating with those called "sinners" and "tax collectors" for example. Compassion is comforting someone who has been injured, but, also, working to correct the injustice that harmed him/her.

Inclusive

Being inclusive is another mark of a servant leader. A good leader recognizes that others' viewpoints are, in many ways, sacred—our views are extensions of ourselves. This doesn't mean that differing views cannot be shared, rather, it means honoring the person even when you don't agree with the thought. Sometimes it may even be necessary to challenge someone very gently to reconsider their opinion or viewpoint, yet, this should only be done in love and in the best interest of the person. This situation might be best handled by talking with a mentor or campus minister before acting. True servant leadership requires that you always honor and work to include each member of your small community.

Empowering

You've probably heard the saying: "give someone a fish, and they eat for a day; teach them to fish, and they eat for a lifetime." This is what empowerment is all about—giving people the tools to do for themselves. Servant leaders empower others both by helping them recognize their gifts and talents, and, through collaboration with the Spirit, helping them to acknowledge the power to grow and change.

Exercises Forgiveness

Jesus, the model for servant leadership, is quoted as saying "forgive them, they know not what they do" while dying on the cross. We hope that that's not something any of us will have a chance to do, however, we are called to forgive "seven times seventy times." What does this mean for us? It means not holding things against someone in your small community. It means letting people be who they are—even if you don't like it or it reminds you of something you dislike within yourself. Forgiveness is not a one-time event, it is a continual choice that may have to be practiced every day, or at least every group meeting!

Listening

As a small community leader, listening is an important skill. Servant leaders truly listen to those with whom they interact—they listen to both what is being said and what is not being said. Nonverbal communication says more than what is spoken. Have you ever had the experience of being in a class or a conversation and realizing as you walked away that you didn't remember any of it? That is an example of "hearing" instead of

“listening.” Think about the person you remembered as a leader in your life. Did this person truly listen to you? How about other experiences of being listened to—perhaps by a friend or family member? What was it like to be listened to? Can you think of a time when you were able to tell that something was wrong without anything being said? All of these experiences indicate the importance of listening. Truly listening, sometimes called “active listening” or “reflective listening,” is a skill that really makes a difference for leaders.

Part III: Leading the Group—Tips and Exercises

Active Listening Exercise

Often when we listen, we are often more concerned with what we are going to say or how we are going to respond than with what is being said. Active listening is a way of being more focused on what is being said (and unsaid) than on our personal response. *(Ask these questions and give time for participants to think or jot answers.)*

Think about a regular conversation you have had in the last day or so:

- Can you remember who was present?
- Can you remember what each person said?
- Were you able to name the feelings expressed?
- What was unsaid but still part of the conversation?
- What are your feelings about the conversation itself?

(After giving a short time for the previous questions, present these in a similar manner.)

Now, think about a conversation during which you truly felt “heard”—a time that you shared something important to you that the person listening really understood what you had to say and responded well:

- Can you remember who was present?
- Can you remember what each person said?
- Were you able to name the feelings expressed?
- What was unsaid but still part of the conversation?
- What are your feelings about the conversation itself?

(After giving time for thought, lead a short discussion on the following questions.)

- What was difference between the two conversations? Why?
- How did the two conversations make you feel?
- How did you respond to “being heard”?
- What made you realize that you were being listened to?

Our second conversations were probably ones during which “active listening” or “reflective listening” took place. Active listening takes an effort—it takes energy to focus on what someone is saying. For example: when someone pops into your room and says “what’s up?” you might continue to work or surf on your computer as you answer—you probably don’t expect much from that interaction. But, if he or she is upset and says “can we talk about something?” your response will most likely be to turn away from the computer, face the person, and listen. There is an acronym for how to be physically present in a conversation—SOLER. It stands for:

- S – Face person SQUARELY *(but not with military precision)*
- O – OPEN posture *(if everything is crossed tight—arms, legs—you’re not open)*
- L – LEAN towards other *(inclined toward—not falling on or backing away from)*

E – EYE Contact (*caring look—not staring, not looking elsewhere*)

R – RELAXED while attending (*paying attention to the person and responding*)

Think about your usual reaction to someone asking to talk seriously, you probably already do most or all of this. This is one part of active listening. In your group, you won't move to face people as they speak, but, you will probably look toward your group members and naturally lean a bit toward them especially if they are sharing something personal and/or with a lot of feeling. It may help to do a quick "check" on yourself a couple of times during a session just to see how you're sitting and physically responding—after awhile, it will be natural to follow the SOLER suggestions.

Responding with understanding

There is another part of active listening which we call "responding with understanding." "Responding with understanding" is a skill that can be learned—if you don't already do it naturally. It included several parts:

Listening to the person's total communication (*both what is said and what is unsaid but indicated by posture, tone, etc.—non-verbal communication*)

Trying to identify the feelings being expressed (*common feelings are sad, mad, glad, hurt, hungry, lonely*)

Communicating an understanding of those feelings

Being careful not to evaluate what the person says, but, showing that you understand her/his viewpoint. In other words, translating what the speaker says, without parroting back his/her sentiments word for word (*It's helpful to keep in mind that feelings are neutral—they are neither good or bad—others may feel differently in a situation than we did or would expect ourselves to feel*)

(*Check with participants for understanding, if they have need for it, clarify the above points in your own words/experience.*)

When you are actively listening, you should be able to fill in the blanks in one of the following questions in response to someone's statement:

"I'm hearing that you feel (feeling) because of (experiences that underlie feeling) ."

OR

"It sounds like you're feeling (feeling) since (experiences that underlie feeling) happened."

It can also be a simple rewording or paraphrase.

For example:

Someone says to you: "I don't have time for all of my homework. Every professor feels like his/her class is the most important, and no one else is giving us any other work. And that's before all of my extra curriculars."

To paraphrase, you could say: "You're swamped by all of your assignments and trying to juggle the time demands of your schoolwork with all of your other demands."

To include a "feeling", one could also say:

"I'm hearing that you're frustrated because professors keep loading on the schoolwork and you also have committed to a number of extra curricular activities."

Or

"It sounds like you're overwhelmed by trying to juggle the demands of your professors and everything else you've committed to."

Why do this? Because it shows that you are listening to what the person is saying and to his/her feelings; it also allows the person to redefine what she/he is trying to say if you haven't quite gotten it the way it was intended—it gives her/him permission to share what she/he wants to tell you. It also forces you to listen for the important parts—feelings and underlying experiences. Sometimes, we don't really know what we are thinking or feeling until someone reflects back to us what we are saying. *(If you have such an experience, share it while being careful to protect confidentiality.)*

As you lead your small community, you probably won't use this technique every time someone shares. It is, however, helpful to be able to fill in the blanks in your head—just to make sure you know what is being shared and to get in the habit of actively listening. This is another good way to use to check yourself as a leader; between this and SOLER, you will have a pretty good idea of how you are doing.

I mentioned that "responding with understanding" was a skill—it can be learned—so, we are going to practice with each other now. Divide yourselves into twos and get into a comfortable position for sharing—remember SOLER *(allow time for movement)*; for this exercise, each of you will have both a chance to share and a chance to respond; our question for sharing is "my first day at college." *(Alternate or additional question: How I feel about being a small community leader? Why?)* Choose one person to share and the other to respond with understanding—using one of our statements:

"I'm hearing that you feel (feeling) because of (experiences that underlie feeling) ."

OR

"It sounds like you're feeling (feeling) since (experiences that underlie feeling) happened."

(Allow about 5-7 minutes then remind the pairs to change roles and repeat.)

(After all have practiced, lead a short discussion about the practice session.)

What was it like to be listened to?

How did it feel to know that someone was responding to you?

What was it like to listen so intently?

How did it feel to respond in this way?

Even though this exercise may have felt artificial on both sides, I hope it was enough for you to see how this works and how important "responding with understanding" can be. If you can fill in the statement while you are listening, you are truly listening. Be careful that these statements don't become the goal—the goal is to listen to the person who is sharing and to understand what is being shared. This is a tool that will help you to get started; you may find another way that works for you after you put active listening into practice with your small community.

(A short break may be helpful here to allow for movement back into place and refreshment refills, etc.)

Environment

Environment is an important part of any group. It can help to set the mood, to create an atmosphere for prayer, to keep everyone on track, and to bring the group together. There are certain things you might want to consider when creating a good environment for sharing.

Comfortable—A room with big pillows communicates something quite different than a large classroom with desks and florescent lighting. Try to pick a space that is comfortable and inviting.

Privacy—It is important that the hour of sharing be uninterrupted time. If meeting in a dorm room, communicate with your roommate. In the same vein, do not pick the lobby of a dorm where people are walking by during the sharing. Turn off cell phones.

Hospitality—Make sure that people know the location of the meeting place, and that they are welcomed upon their arrival. Inform your group of the location of the facilities. You might want to have snacks available at some point in the meeting (perhaps after the meeting, as this is less distracting).

Equal level of seating for all members—when members are at different levels, this hinders sharing.

One group—no person blocked by another—Make sure that no one is behind another person or “outside” of the circle. Rearrange the space if this occurs.

Same place and set-up each time you meet (if possible)

A focal point—A prayer cloth, Bible, candle, or other object in the center of the group helps to center the group and remind people why they are present. It also gives people something on which to focus their attention.

Prayer and Sharing are set apart—As we begin with a ritual when we come together to celebrate our communal celebration, we also want to make sure that we have a “beginning” to our sharing together. A few options could be dimming the lights, opening the Bible, lighting a candle, taking a moment of quiet, setting snacks/drinks aside, etc.

Be prepared—Have everything ready to go (for example, if you will be using a CD player, have the player and song cued, seats in place, focal point ready, etc.)

Responding to Difficult Behaviors

Facilitating groups necessitates being aware of the many personalities of the people who compose the group. Some personalities truly help the discussion, while others can create difficulties in the group. Sometimes, one person plays both of these roles at different times. For example, an extrovert can be helpful in starting a conversation. However, if someone is dominating the group, then no one else has the opportunity to speak. An intellectual can add depth to a conversation, but someone who questions every comment, or stays solely in the head, can hinder sharing. Let's take a moment to explore some behaviors that cause groups difficulties, and ways we could address them.

Dominating the Group - What does it mean to dominate a group? (Have group answer) How would we address someone who is dominating the group? (Again, look for answers from group). Some suggestions: No one speaks a second time before

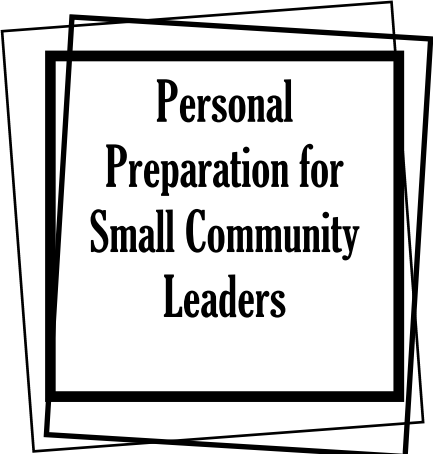
everyone has had a chance to speak. Perhaps during a breath, “you’ve thought much about this, does anyone else have something to add?” Talking to the person outside of the group and asking him/her to help you create opportunities for others to speak.

Shy Person – Who is shy person? (Have group answer). How do we address people who do not contribute? We never want to put shy people on the spot. Use body language gives to invite them to speak, for example, “I’d like to give everyone who would like to share a chance to share on this topic” (while looking at them).

Skeptic – (constant mode of question) Let’s sit with this a while, let’s hold sacred what people say and not feel the need to respond. Or let them take the lead on examining the topic and leading the group in the future. Sometimes being extremely skeptical is a sign of deeper issues. Meet with them outside of the group and say, “it seems like you have a lot of questions about the faith. Would you like to meet with a campus minister to discuss some of these things?”

Intellectual – We want to honor that gift, but can we translate that? Perhaps, “How do you feel about that?” Encourage them to examine their feelings.

Any other experience you’re apprehensive about?



Personal Preparation for Small Community Leaders

Small communities enable people to grow in their relationship with Christ. Within a climate of trust, participants read Scriptures, share faith, pray and support one another in their faith journey. As the leader of the small community, you are extremely important in allowing that to happen. The success of a small community is significantly dependent on the leader whose facilitation encourages good sharing. Therefore, the leader must always be well prepared for the session.

Each week, in preparation for the session, you are encouraged to set some time aside (ideally, at least one hour) in an uninterrupted, quiet place. Take each of the steps below and prayerfully enter into your personal preparation for the small community session.

Pray

Pray for yourself first. The spirituality of the leader has a major impact on the small community. Speak to God of your own desire to grow through this faith community. Reflect on the ways you have been called to conversion. Ask for the grace to be a good leader.

Pray for the other members of the community. Lift them up by name. If specific needs have been raised in the small community, pray for them again at this time.

Read

First, slowly read all the material in the session for that week. Be sure to include the Scripture passages. Read it prayerfully. Do not take time to analyze it or react to it. After you have read it once, go back over it and underline or put thoughts in the margins as you re-read it.

Relax

Take a stretch break here, and walk away from the materials. Put the booklet down, close the Bible and just “be” with the content. Allow the message to sink into you. Get a feel for the overall theme and what you feel God is trying to tell you in this week’s session.

(If possible, take a brief walk outside and think about what you have just read).

Imagine

In your mind’s eye imagine this session unfolding. How is the room set up? Are there any special symbols or ways to enhance the environment that would speak to this theme? Picture the people in your community. See them around the room. How will they respond to this session? How could you maximize the opportunities to share and learn from one another? What could be done to deepen the quality of the “faith in action” in light of this theme? How could you improve this session over the last one?

Respond

This step is very important because it enables you to be very familiar with the materials. Go over the lesson again and be a “participant.” Get into the questions of the session. Have an idea how you might answer them. Are the questions clear? Are you comfortable with them? Do you understand why those questions are being asked? How do the questions tie in with the theme of this week?

(Since you have already gone over all of the questions, you may have a tendency to answer first and often in the actual session, but a good leader encourages the participation of others before speaking. Your reflections on the questions will help you see the wider picture and to allow the session to flow better).



Helpful Hints For Small Community Leaders

IF THIS HAPPENS

LEADER MIGHT RESPOND

1. Interrupting, jumping in

"Maybe we could stop for a moment to be sure that we are listening to each other."

2. Two people talking at once

"We seem to have two conversations going on here; maybe we could hear from X first and then Y."

3. No response to questions

"Perhaps the question is difficult to respond to; let's reword it." (or ask another question related to it.)

4. One person "wipes out" another person's comments

"What _____ has said is from his/her felt experience and has value."

5. Member remains silent

Gently invite participation, reaffirm the right to silence. Get to know the person before and after the meeting. Say, "____, you have been listening intently. Is there anything you'd like to add?"

6. Repetition of the same idea

Summarize their main points and go on. Say: "That's helpful; maybe we could hear now from someone else."

7. Wandering from the topic

"To bring ourselves back to the purpose of our sharing, it appears the basic question here is..."

8. One member dominates the session

Remind the person that each person needs to have the opportunity to share before we hear from the same person again. Say: "What you are saying is helpful, but maybe we could hear from someone else."
Remind them of the guidelines written in the front of the booklet.

9. A member questions each response

Remind the person that each statement is not open to group scrutiny. Say, "We hear your criticism and questions on this, but what is it saying to you personally?"

10. A member begins to cry

Comfort any way you are able (just touching is often enough). Offer option to be silent for a few minutes. Acknowledge the person and thank them for the gift of the tears.

11. The sharing becomes too academic

"While what we are discussing can be very interesting, it is not the purpose of our time together. I think if we look at the questions, we will come back to the focus of this session."

Leadership Notes

Servant Leadership:

Love
Vision
Authenticity & Compassion
Inclusiveness
Empowerment
Exercising Forgiveness
Listening

SOLER—Being Physically Present in a Conversation:

S – Face person SQUARELY (*but not with military precision*)
O – OPEN posture (*if everything is crossed tight—arms, legs—you’re not open*)
L – LEAN towards other (*inclined toward—not falling on or backing away from*)
E – EYE Contact (*caring look—not staring, not looking elsewhere*)
R – RELAXED while attending (*paying attention to the person and responding*)

Responding With Understanding:

“I’m hearing that you feel (feeling) because of (experiences that underlie feeling) .”

OR

“It sounds like you’re feeling (feeling) since (experiences that underlie feeling) happened.”

Asking Questions:

Be aware of the person speaking—be careful not to jump in with a question just because she/he is taking a breath or stopping to think.

Ask open-ended questions—avoid “yes or no” questions as they tend to stop sharing. Some open ended questions are: “tell me more...”; “what was that like?”;

Be careful not to “steer” the person away from feelings or into critical thinking. Asking “why did you do that?”; or “what were you thinking?” Are examples of this.

Ask questions that elicit more response or allow for clarification. “That sounds like it was hard for you”; (*like our “responding with understanding” statements*)