



SAMPLE COPY

LOVING
LEADERSHIP

*A Middle School Study Guide
Girl Genius Part III*

Endow



LOVING

Leadership

Girl Genius Part 3 

Commentary by Casey Sprehe

Edited by Heidi Hess Saxton, Jenny Uebbing and Sarah Heaton

Introduction: *Let's Review*

Chapter**One**: *Servant Leadership: The Humble Heart*.....1

MATERIALS LIST:

Please use the below list to ensure all materials are gathered prior to the start of the chapter.

GENERAL

- A writing utensil (per participant)
- A Bible

ACTIVITY ONE

- A list of characters from movies, books, or other sources who showed leadership skills

ACTIVITY TWO

- Create one Bible verse jigsaw puzzle per group (Visit EndowGroups.org/JigsawPuzzle) (*Romans 12:1, Matthew 7:21-23, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, or John 14:15*, etc)
- Plastic bag for each puzzle

Chapter**Two**: *Mission in Leadership: Called to Love*.....25

ACTIVITY ONE

- 30 strips per participant (1 inch wide by 11 inches long)
- Several rolls of tape
- One marker per participant

ACTIVITY TWO

- Information about service projects and volunteer opportunities in your area

Chapter**Three**: *Leadership Tested: A Journey of Faithfulness* 53

ACTIVITY ONE

- Virtue Word Search (see Appendix One)

ACTIVITY TWO

- 4 paper bags containing a cup, an eraser, a set of sunglasses, and duct tape
- Optional small prize for each member of the winning team

Chapter**Four**: *Enduring Leadership: Persevering in Faith*..... 77

ACTIVITY ONE

- A bag of candy or other small prizes, at least one for each girl
- Several lengths of rope
- Two table knives and forks
- Two pairs of mittens
- A timer or hourglass
- Wrapping paper and tape
- Two small, two medium, and two large boxes (should fit inside one another)
- Packing peanuts or bubble wrap
- Magic markers or crayons

ACTIVITY TWO

- Piece of paper or note card per participant
- One marker per participant

Appendix One: Virtue Word Search..... 102

Girl Genius: Loving Leadership Evaluation 103

Loving Leadership: Girl Genius Part 3

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Nihil Obstat: Mr. Benjamin Akers, S.T.L.
Censor Liborum

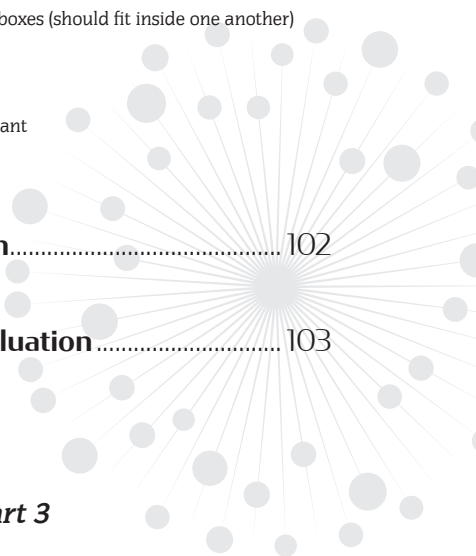
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Let's Review

This is the third part of the *Girl Genius* study series, entitled *Loving Leaderships: Girl Genius Part 3*. As you may remember, in *Defining Dignity: Girl Genius Part 1*, we examined our *Girl Genius*, and of the beautiful complementarity of men and women as they work together to build the kingdom of God.

In *Forming Friendships: Girl Genius Part 2*, we took a closer look at the role of friendship in the Christian life, how we complement one another in both our strengths and weaknesses as we challenge one another to lead holy lives.

In this study, Part 3, we will explore leadership—particularly *servant* leadership, which was the kind of leadership Jesus modeled for us while He was here on earth. As followers of Christ, we are called to imitate His example in every area of our lives, including our willingness to stand up for truth, to serve others, and to strive to grow in perfect love through authentic servant leadership so that one day we might become saints.

Maybe this surprises you, the idea that God is calling you to be a leader . . . or to become a saint. But it's true! His plan for all eternity is to bring each one of us into full communion with His Holy Trinity, Love itself. And when we cooperate with God's plan for our lives, we can, in the words of St. Catherine of Siena, "set the world on fire."

In each chapter, we're going to take a look at what it means for a woman to be a leader in a distinctively feminine way, how God gives us special gifts so that we can fulfill our unique purpose within the Body of Christ, and how responding to our call helps us to grow in virtue and love, so that at the end of our lives we might experience the most incredible gift of all—being united with God who is Love Himself!

God gives each of us both *natural* gifts (a reflection of our dignity as human beings made in His image and likeness) and *spiritual* gifts (planted in us at baptism and strengthened at our confirmation). To the degree that we give our *fiat*, or yes, to God—just as Mary did when the Angel Gabriel announced that God had chosen her to become the mother of Jesus—each of us is extended the remarkable privilege of using our gifts and abilities to carry Jesus out into the world. Just like Mary, we are capable of receiving Jesus into our hearts and, in turn, touching other people's hearts with the love of God. This is the essence of our *Girl Genius*: *striving to receive and to cooperate with God's loving will for each one of us, so that we might reveal his unchanging love to the world.*

And it all begins with a simple “Yes.”

Girl Genius: According to Pope St. John Paul II, our “genius” as women is our natural ability to relate to and connect with others—our “capacity for the other.”

Stop & Chat

Do you ever think of yourself as a “leader” or a “saint in the making?” Why or why not?

Have you ever considered the connection between leadership and holiness?

What opportunities has God given you to show leadership, and how has it given you the opportunity to grow in love and humility?

LEADERSHIP, JESUS STYLE

When you think of a leader, who comes to mind? Is it someone who gets out in front of others, inspiring the team? Or, if it was a less than stellar leader who came to mind, maybe he or she inspired resentment by bossing people around and demanding that others do the grunt work (and taking all the credit once the job was done?)

The truth is, even the apostles, Jesus' first followers, had to grow in their understanding of the true meaning of leadership. In the *Gospel of Mark* we read about two of Jesus' disciples, James and John, the "sons of Zebedee,"¹ bickering over who was to be greatest in Gods' kingdom. They took their disagreement to Jesus, insisting that He grant each of them special status. You can almost hear Jesus sigh.

Then the Lord gave them an unforgettable lesson in Christian leadership:

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.²

In time, Jesus' words proved to be prophetic as, one after the other, nearly all of the Twelve we asked to lay down their lives for Christ, quite literally, setting the example for thousands of Christian men and women in the centuries that followed. The apostles chose to die as martyrs rather than to deny their faith in God. They chose to imitate the servant leadership modeled by Jesus, even when it meant facing certain death.

Martyr: A Greek word meaning "witness," a martyr is a person who is ready to suffer or even die for Christ or for a conscientious decision made on the basis of faith.³

1 *Mark* 10:35-45.

2 *Mark* 10:42-45.

3 *YouCat*, 248

Examples of courageous and virtuous leadership can be seen throughout Church history. We find a compelling example of servant leadership is the life of St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894 -1941). As a child Kolbe received a vision from the Blessed Mother, in which she offered him two crowns—the white crown of purity and the red crown of martyrdom. “I choose both,” he told her. From that moment forward, he gave himself entirely to God.

His work in the media and his early adaptation of cutting-edge technology helped to launch the Church into the 20th century, but that’s not what he is remembered for. St. Maximilian is venerated because of what he did in the filthy, hidden horror of a concentration camp, where he stepped forward as a volunteer and offered himself a willing victim in place of a fellow prisoner condemned to death by the Nazis. The reason we know his story? The man whose life he saved lived to tell the tale.

God raises up virtuous leaders from among people of all walks of life, in every country and from every time. In the summer of 2014, a pregnant young mother named Mariam Yahya Ibrahim was sentenced to death because she refused to renounce her Christian faith. Imprisoned alongside her eighteen-month-old son and shackled in restraints, Mariam gave birth to her daughter, Maya, who was injured in the delivery.⁴ Christians all over the world rejoiced when Miriam was ultimately released and permitted to leave the country with her American husband and their two children. Through her ordeal Mariam was willing to endure torture rather than deny her faith.

Of course, martyrdom is not the only way to stand up for Jesus and say “Yes!” to God’s call upon your life. God gives many of us a different kind of mission, a calling that is rooted in faithful, wholehearted service. When we offer our lives to God, seeking each day to be faithful, joyful, humble, and loving daughters of our Heavenly Father, we can be powerful and effective leaders, carrying His love to a world in desperate need.

⁴ My daughter may never walk properly,” Ted Thornhill in ‘The Daily Mail. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2676747/My-daughter-never-walk-properly-Sudanese-mother-sentenced-hang-converting-Christianity-reveals-doctors-fears-baby-gave-birth-chains.html>. Accessed October 20, 2014.

Augusta State University counseling student Jennifer Keeton was told that her Christian beliefs were unethical and incompatible with the more popular secular views in her college counseling program. You see, Jen didn't hide who she was while in class. Once her professors learned that she was a faithful Christian who believed that engaging in homosexual behavior was disordered, from both classroom discussions and private conversations with other students, school officials stepped in and pressured her to renounce her beliefs and fall in line with the school's teachings on sexuality.

Her college told her to stop sharing her views with others, and even threatened that if she didn't change her beliefs, she wouldn't graduate from the counseling program. Jen didn't back down in the face of threats from her school administration, and she ended up getting expelled. She filed a lawsuit against the school for discrimination, but a judge threw out her complaint, telling her she didn't have a right to stand up for her Christian beliefs.

We do not know how God will call us to live out our faith, but we can be sure that at some point in our lives we will face something that challenges us to stand up for our faith or tempts us to walk away. To be most effective and most successful in our mission, we must cultivate virtue in our own lives. We will take a closer look at four of these virtues in this study:

- Humility
- Love
- Loyalty
- Perseverance

Are you ready to dive in and discover how you can be a servant leader for Jesus? Let's start by taking a closer look at what we mean by "leadership."

Stop & Chat

Church history is full of stories of men and women who died for the faith. In addition to those mentioned, which saints can you name who were willing to die for their faith?

Although we will not all shed blood, we are called to by martyrs by daily laying down our lives (our preferences and our desires) for the good of another. What are ways that you have experienced someone else laying down their life for your sake?

What are some ways that you've personally felt called to take a stand for Christ?

Memorare

Remember,

*O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled
to thy protection,
implored thy help,
or sought thy intercession,
was left unaided.*

*Inspired by this confidence,
we fly unto thee,*

*O virgin of virgins, our mother.
To thee do we come,
before thee we stand,
sinful and sorrowful.*

*O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not our petitions,
but in your mercy hear
and answer us.*

Amen.



Servant Leadership

The Humble Heart

Purpose

In *Defining Dignity: Girl Genius Part 1*, we had a magazine activity that revealed the world's standard for what makes us important: we must be popular, skinny, smart, athletic and pretty in order to be valued. All too often, that same standard is set for girls who would be seen as role models and leaders. Sadly, many young women have sacrificed their dignity, relationships with their families, and even their lives in order to “be someone” by the superficial standards set by the media.

When focused solely on themselves and their own ambitions, many of these gifted individuals pursued their dreams . . . and found themselves instead trapped in a high-profile nightmare of broken relationships, addictions, isolation, and burnout.

Tabloids and checkout line magazines are full of stories of the public downfall of young starlets and veteran actors alike, showcasing the high price of celebrity. One minute you're riding a wave of popularity and seemingly worldwide fame, the next you're featured in a cover story write up of “what went wrong.”

This is how the world treats its role models; as disposable, momentary distractions good for selling products. There is good news though; we were made for something *more* than fame and celebrity, something infinitely better.

Being a leader is not about what we look like. It's not about the degree of notoriety we achieve or how many "likes" our actions garner us, either in the real world or the virtual one. Rather, it's about who we are at our most fundamental level. But even more than that it's about *whose* we are:

We belong to Christ.

By virtue of our baptism, every single girl in this room belongs to Jesus Christ, who knew us and loved us from the time we were in our mother's womb. Listen to God speaking to the prophet Jeremiah:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you . . . Do not say, "I am only a youth"; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.¹

God gives each of us a unique mission, a calling that is deeply personal and customized to our particular abilities and gifts. Our task will be different from Jeremiah's; it won't be the same as the Virgin Mary's, either. And it may not look anything like the mission of the girls sitting to you left and to you right.

Nevertheless, God has entrusted each of us with specific gifts and abilities, and He calls us to respond with humble, grateful hearts and with loving acts of service. When we do so we are acting with authentic leadership.

DID YOU KNOW?

Three of the Old Testament books are named for courageous women who were also servant leaders. Can you name them? If not, look them up in the front of your Bible!

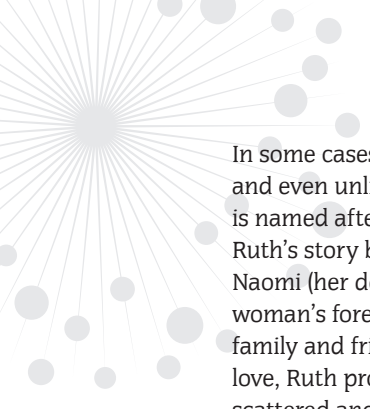
¹ *Jeremiah* 1:5-6

What is leadership?

Defining leadership can be a tricky task, as *leadership* itself is a neutral term. People can follow leaders to do either good or bad things. Anyone who guides people in a certain direction can be called a leader. In this sense, both Mother Teresa and Hitler were leaders. An abolitionist and a slave driver are both leaders. In each example, one leads toward good and the other toward evil. We must form our hearts after the One who made them, accepting the grace He wants to give in order that we may be *holy* leaders.

There are different styles of leadership, too. Some are characterized as strong and determined when it comes to personal or individual goals (“I can do it!”); these are *achievers*. Others are more comfortable envisioning the “big picture” or working out details as part of a team (“We can do it!”); they are *organizers*. Some readily see the gifts and abilities of others and know how to help them succeed (“You can do it!”); they are *teachers*. And some have been given special gifts of faith that help them to recognize the hand of God at work (“God will do it!”); they are *intercessors*.

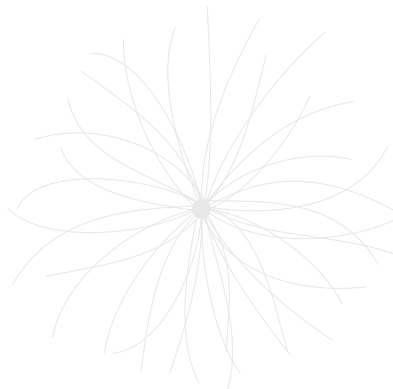
Think of people you know who have exhibited these kinds of leadership in good ways. Maybe it’s that girl in your class who broke the long-distance running record in your school ... twice. Or think of how your pastor creates such fantastic summer programs for the kids at your parish, getting all the families working together and having fun! Maybe an older relative showed you how to shoot manual photography or ride a bike, encouraging you every step of the way until you could do it well enough to teach someone else. Or that youth group leader who never gets discouraged when the money for the summer mission trip is slowly trickling in, but just keeps telling you stories of how God came through for her, time after time.



In some cases, leadership can take extremely humble and even unlikely forms. For example, the *Book of Ruth* is named after a young widow from a pagan nation. Ruth's story begins when she follows her mother-in-law Naomi (her dead husband's mom!) back to the older woman's foreign homeland, leaving all of her own family and friends behind. With humility and great love, Ruth provided for Naomi and herself by gathering scattered and rejected grain from the already-harvested fields, a practice known as "gleaning". Her grace and diligence caught the eye of the wealthy landowner, Boaz, who went on to ask her hand in marriage. Ruth's willingness to go where God called her and her daily small actions saved Naomi and her from the life of poverty common to widows and cooperated in a special way to set the stage for God's ultimate plan of salvation; Mary, the mother of Jesus, traces her family tree directly to the family of Ruth and Boaz!

Being a Christian leader is a *lifestyle*. It means showing in both our words and actions that we are followers of Christ, and that we want our lives to please God in every detail. Instead of gossiping with our friends, for example, we inspire them to become virtuous and life giving in their speech, inviting them to become the best version of themselves.

And rather than looking away in embarrassment or discomfort when somebody is suffering at the hands of a bully, we raise our voices or our hands and get involved, refusing to let our silence contribute to the victim's suffering.



As we read in the introduction, one of the most important ways to become a strong and confident leader is to cultivate essential leadership virtues. In this lesson, let's focus on the virtue of *humility*. In its Glossary, the *Catechism* defines humility as "The virtue by which a Christian acknowledges that God is the author of all good. Humility avoids inordinate ambition or pride, and provides the foundation for turning to God in prayer."² A humble person recognizes that their talent comes from God and should be shared and used for his purpose. Part of practicing true humility means being able to see our gifts and talents as they truly are—perfections of God's design, intended to help us glorify Him. It's not wrong to recognize when God has made you good at something—it's actually right and just, and it brings Him glory, as long as you give credit where credit is due!

This is very different from false humility—the kind that denies or diminishes what we know to be true about us, which can actually be a twisted form of attention-getting pride.

"Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending.
You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds?
Lay first the foundation of humility."

ST. AUGUSTINE

² Glossary of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, page 882.

Do You Have a Humble Heart?

Are you cultivating authentic humility—or does false humility trip you up at times? Take this little quiz and find out!

Circle the statements that you are most likely to say.

1. Someone compliments your new dress, which you just bought last weekend after cashing your paycheck.
 - a. “Oh, I don’t know. It’s not the best color for me. But I love your shoes! ”
 - b. “Thanks. It’s not as nice as the one Hannah had on last week though, I bet she dropped \$200 bucks on hers.”
 - c. “Thank you! I worked extra shifts last month so I could splurge on it, and I love it too.”
2. Your mother asks you to clear the table and load the dishwasher . . . again.
 - a. “Mom, it’s Jenna’s turn tonight. I have homework.”
 - b. “Sure, Mom! It will just take a few minutes.”
 - c. (Under your breath so Mom doesn’t hear): “It’s not fair!”
3. A teacher asks you to head up the food pantry service project. You’ve never done something this big before, but your friend Kris did it last year.
 - a. “Uh . . . I’m really busy studying for midterms, Mrs. White. Did you ask Kris? She did a great job last year.”
 - b. “Sorry. I’m allergic to charity.”
 - c. “Sure, Mrs. White. I’m willing to try it, but I may need Kris’s help – I’ve never done something like this!”

Don't worry if you didn't get "top marks" (C, B, C). We cannot let our faults trip us up. When we acknowledge them and seek reconciliation through the sacraments our faults can turn from obstacles to stepping stones. The *YouCat* says: "Christians who take seriously their decision to follow Jesus seek the joy that comes from a radical new beginning with God. Even the saints went to confession regularly, if possible. They needed it in order to grow in humility and charity, so as to allow themselves to be touched by God's healing light even the most inmost recesses of their souls."³

Virtue: Qualities of the mind, the will, and the heart, acquired through repetition, that instill strength of character and stability of personality (Alexander Havard, *Virtuous Leadership*).

ACTIVITY ONE: LEADERSHIP CHARADES

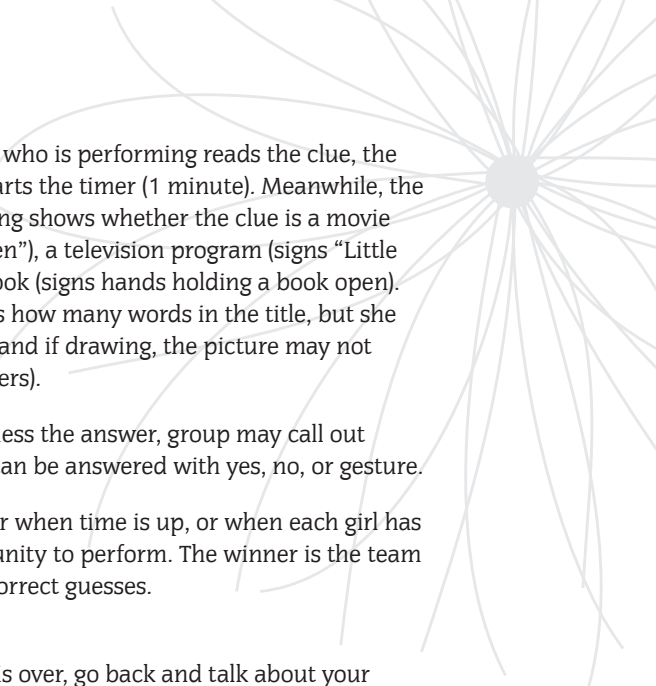
Before Starting:

One of the important qualities of a leader is the ability to inspire others to follow your example. For this activity, come up with a list of characters from movies, books, or other sources that showed leadership skills. (If you prefer, this game can also be done as "Pictionary" by drawing the clue instead of acting it out.)

Directions:

Divide into two teams, and each team chooses one person to go first. For the "charades" version of the game, each team takes turns guessing; for "Pictionary," both sides guess the clue at the same time.

³ *YouCat*, 235.



After the player who is performing reads the clue, the group leader starts the timer (1 minute). Meanwhile, the player performing shows whether the clue is a movie (signs “Big Screen”), a television program (signs “Little Screen”), or a book (signs hands holding a book open). Then she signals how many words in the title, but she may not speak (and if drawing, the picture may not contain any letters).

To help them guess the answer, group may call out questions that can be answered with yes, no, or gesture.

The game is over when time is up, or when each girl has had the opportunity to perform. The winner is the team with the most correct guesses.

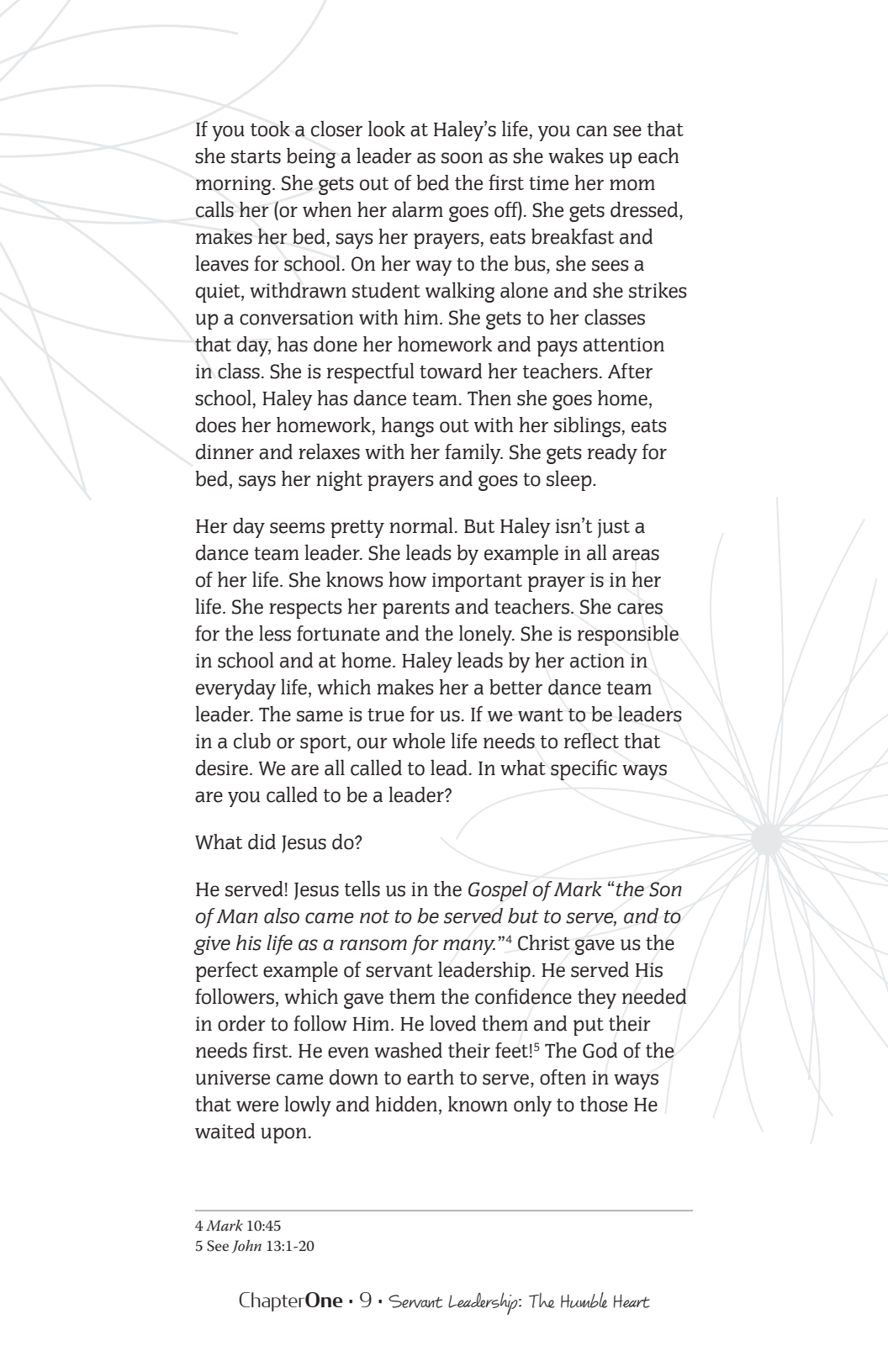
Conclusion:

After the game is over, go back and talk about your favorite characters in books and movies, including those you have just guessed. What makes these characters so memorable—and what qualities do they have that show authentic servant leadership, especially the virtue of humility?

CASE IN POINT

When we think of “leaders,” we often think of highly visible individuals who are out in front, leading the rest of the team to win a victory or to accomplish a goal. And yet, true leadership runs deeper than the ability to shine in the spotlight; if you have the heart of a leader, those qualities will shine in you all day, every day, whether or not your actions are visible to anyone other than God.

Let’s take a look at Haley. She is a dance team leader at school. She goes to practice and begins warming up without her instructor telling her to do so. She helps the other students do the same. In some ways she’s like many other students in after-school activities—yearbook, sports, or drama club. What makes Haley so special?



If you took a closer look at Haley's life, you can see that she starts being a leader as soon as she wakes up each morning. She gets out of bed the first time her mom calls her (or when her alarm goes off). She gets dressed, makes her bed, says her prayers, eats breakfast and leaves for school. On her way to the bus, she sees a quiet, withdrawn student walking alone and she strikes up a conversation with him. She gets to her classes that day, has done her homework and pays attention in class. She is respectful toward her teachers. After school, Haley has dance team. Then she goes home, does her homework, hangs out with her siblings, eats dinner and relaxes with her family. She gets ready for bed, says her night prayers and goes to sleep.

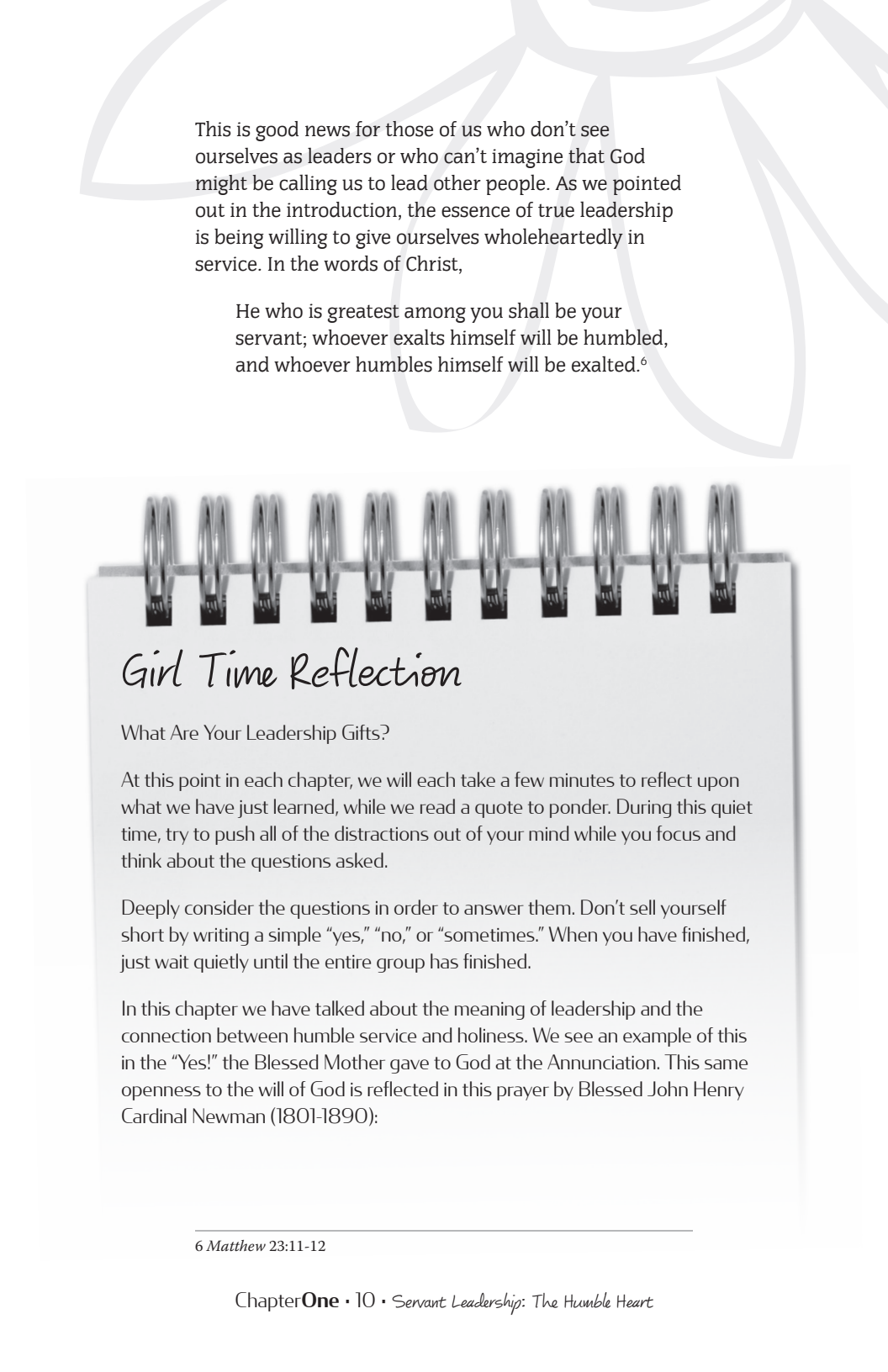
Her day seems pretty normal. But Haley isn't just a dance team leader. She leads by example in all areas of her life. She knows how important prayer is in her life. She respects her parents and teachers. She cares for the less fortunate and the lonely. She is responsible in school and at home. Haley leads by her action in everyday life, which makes her a better dance team leader. The same is true for us. If we want to be leaders in a club or sport, our whole life needs to reflect that desire. We are all called to lead. In what specific ways are you called to be a leader?

What did Jesus do?

He served! Jesus tells us in the *Gospel of Mark* “*the Son of Man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*”⁴ Christ gave us the perfect example of servant leadership. He served His followers, which gave them the confidence they needed in order to follow Him. He loved them and put their needs first. He even washed their feet!⁵ The God of the universe came down to earth to serve, often in ways that were lowly and hidden, known only to those He waited upon.

⁴ Mark 10:45

⁵ See John 13:1-20



This is good news for those of us who don't see ourselves as leaders or who can't imagine that God might be calling us to lead other people. As we pointed out in the introduction, the essence of true leadership is being willing to give ourselves wholeheartedly in service. In the words of Christ,

He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.⁶



Girl Time Reflection

What Are Your Leadership Gifts?

At this point in each chapter, we will each take a few minutes to reflect upon what we have just learned, while we read a quote to ponder. During this quiet time, try to push all of the distractions out of your mind while you focus and think about the questions asked.

Deeply consider the questions in order to answer them. Don't sell yourself short by writing a simple "yes," "no," or "sometimes." When you have finished, just wait quietly until the entire group has finished.

In this chapter we have talked about the meaning of leadership and the connection between humble service and holiness. We see an example of this in the "Yes!" the Blessed Mother gave to God at the Annunciation. This same openness to the will of God is reflected in this prayer by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-1890):

⁶ Matthew 23:11-12

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.⁷

1. "He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another." What work do you think God has called you to and what are five gifts, talents, or strengths that He has equipped you with for it?

-
-
-
-
-

2. What does Newman mean when he says: "I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments"? What does this say about leadership?

3. What do you think Cardinal Newman meant when he said that God sometimes gives us a work to do that we may not know about in this life but only in the next?

⁷ Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, "Prayers and Hymns by John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-1890)" from *A Catholic Prayer Book* as quoted on CatholiCity.com. <http://www.catholicity.com/prayer/prayers-and-hymns-by-john-henry-cardinal-newman.html>.. Accessed October 20, 2014.

LIFE'S NOT-SO-LITTLE LESSONS

Leah Darrow pursued a modeling career that led to becoming a finalist on *America's Next Top Model* . . . and also led her to make many spiritually, physically and emotionally harmful choices along the way in her search for real love. At a photo shoot shortly after her appearance on the reality TV show, a flash of insight caused Leah to open her eyes and see that what she was doing was drawing plenty of attention to herself but was leading her farther and farther from God.


"I knew God had given me so many gifts and talents and for so many years I had wasted them," she said. "I used every gift and talent for me... I used it all for myself."⁸ She returned to the Catholic faith in which she had been raised, and she began to share her story publicly, so that others might experience that same forgiveness and turn their hearts toward God.

Today Leah is serving God and the whole Body of Christ by sharing her story. This is a great example of how God uses those who are humble and willing to share both their stories and their gifts in order to fulfill their mission from God. Because she was not afraid to share herself and how God changed her life, she became a leader not just in the world of fashion, but an example of godly Catholic womanhood to youth all over the world!

In the *Gospel of John*, we read of a Samaritan woman with a not-so-reputable past who had a similar life-changing encounter with Jesus.

Read *John* 4:1-30, 39-42.

⁸ John Stegeman, "From Top Model to role model: Leah Darrow shares story" in *The Catholic Telegraph*. <http://www.thecatholictelegraph.com/from-top-model-to-role-model-leah-darrow-shares-story/13471>. Accessed October 20, 2014.



Once she met Jesus, this woman found the courage to go preach about Him in the town to people who knew all about her past mistakes. That action took a great amount of humility! But she desperately wanted to tell them about Christ. She was in effect saying, “It is not about me, it’s about Jesus. I know that you have seen me make mistakes and that I have hurt some of you, but I have encountered the love of Christ and it has changed me. I want to invite you to encounter Christ for yourself. The text goes on to tell us that because she invited people to go see Jesus they came to believe. What a leader!

Humility can be such a hard virtue to practice. Why? We all like to be recognized when we do good things or to be given credit when we do something well. And we certainly do not like others to see our faults. It is important to note that there is nothing wrong with being recognized for our accomplishments; it becomes problematic only when we do not thank God for the gifts He gave us, or when we do not use our talents to honor Him. St. Paul tells us that no matter what we are doing, we need to do it all for the glory of God.⁹

We read earlier that truly great leadership is rooted not in *who* we are but in *whose* we are. If we belong to Christ, then let us look to Him to know how to lead. Christ is God. He came down to earth as a man; he took on human flesh and blood in what we call the Incarnation. Talk about humility! He surrendered everything, even His very life, and became one of us because He loves us so much!

To be a good leader, we need to serve others like Christ did. It takes a great amount of humility to be able to put others’ needs before our own. But practice makes perfect. And in fact, the more we serve, the more humble we can become.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Part of our girl genius is the capacity for others, to see what people around us need. When we put our girl genius to use we can humble ourselves to serve in the way that the people around us need, even if it isn't how we naturally would. The women at the well was there at the hottest part of the day because she was trying to avoid people who knew her sins. It was not natural for her to go speak in front of large crowds, she was probably really scared! In that moment she chose to step out of her comfort zone and be the leader her community needed, even though it meant embarrassment for her.



Stop & Chat

In the *Catechism*, we find that the sacraments of *initiation* (baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist) are intended to “ground the common vocation of all Christ’s disciples, a vocation to holiness and to the mission of evangelizing the world.”¹⁰ In the stories of Leah Darrow and the Samaritan woman we discover women who pursued God and shared their faith with the world despite the mistakes of their past.

If the sacraments of *initiation* provide a foundation for the Christian life, how might the sacraments of *vocation* (matrimony and holy orders) and *healing* (reconciliation and anointing) help us to achieve the two-fold goal of personal holiness and evangelization? Can you think of an example of how partaking in the sacraments of healing might strengthen your leadership abilities? Or how a “yes” to a sacrament of vocation might take you to a next-level capacity in your leadership?

Whaddaya do?

Each day we make a series of choices. Some of our choices help us to be servant leaders and to grow in humility and love—and others, not so much. So Whaddaya Do?

Break into groups of three to six girls and talk about each of the following scenarios. Then prepare a short skit based on one of the scenarios that shows how our choices can make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

1. You are student council president, and it's the end of the Sweetheart Dance. Your cleanup crew has left, only they didn't finish the job. You are tired and just want to go home. Whaddaya do?
2. You score the winning goal in your soccer match. Everyone congratulates you. Whaddaya do?
3. You are struggling in science class. A girl who you don't get along with is the smartest student in the class. She offers to help you. Whaddaya do?
4. Your youth group is serving at the soup kitchen. The member with the next hour didn't show up, and you stay late and cover. She shows up 30 minutes into it. Whaddaya do?



Meet a New Friend


In this section we will reflect on the examples of the saints, our friends in heaven who are praying for us, and who lived lives of courageous virtue. From their place of eternal love and happiness, our brothers and sisters in the Faith can see us and pray for us. Their witness to the faithfulness and mercy of God stretches from the earliest moments of human history and continues to the present day.

In the *Book of Hebrews*, we read that these men and women now form a “*great cloud of witnesses*” that surround us in a kind of heavenly amphitheater, watching us as we “*run with perseverance the race that is set before us.*”¹¹ Though we may sometimes feel alone when we try to remain faithful to the mission God has given us to do, we can be confident that God never leaves us to our own devices. An entire family – the Communion of Saints—who want to help us run to win, surrounds us!

Fresh out of college, Heidi experienced the Communion of Saints in a very personal way. Not long after becoming Catholic, she moved halfway across the country on her own to take a new job—her dream job! She didn’t know anyone at her new parish though, and sitting at Mass on Sundays was often a lonely experience for her. When an empathetic friend gave her a little Miraculous Medal and suggested that she “tell Mary about it,” Heidi reluctantly did just that.

The first Sunday after receiving the medal, she held it in her hand before going into Mass and whispered, “Mary, if you can hear me, send someone to sit with me in church. Amen.” Then she went into church, got down on the kneeler, and began to pray. To her surprise, when she looked up, a strange woman was standing there. “I just moved here,” she whispered to Heidi. “Can I sit with you?”

¹¹ *Hebrews* 12:1-2



The same thing happened the next week: Heidi prayed, and *another* woman she didn't know was standing there, waiting to sit with her. The third week, there were *four* women. "They usually sat in front of me," Heidi explained. "But a visiting family had occupied their usual pew, and they saw there was plenty of room in mine! I often joined them after that, recognizing that sometimes God intervenes on our behalf . . . and sometimes He expects us to make a little effort, ourselves!"

In the saint story this week, we find another example of someone who asked God to intervene in a situation she felt powerless to change. Let's get to know St. Scholastica and her twin brother St. Benedict.

DID YOU KNOW?

The **communion of saints** is the spiritual solidarity that binds together the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven in one mystical body under Christ, its head.

ST. SCHOLASTICA

Born late in the fifth century, Benedict and Scholastica are frequently pictured together in icons. Benedict is known as the Father of Western Monasticism and the founder of the Benedictine order, having written the "Rule of St. Benedict" that is followed by Benedictine monks and nuns all over the world. Tradition suggests that not long after Benedict built his monastery at Monte Cassino Scholastica became abbess at a convent several miles away.

Most of what we know about Scholastica comes from Pope St. Gregory the Great's account of her in his *Dialogues*. St. Gregory notes that Benedict and Scholastica were very close even though they only saw each other once a year. Benedict, and a few of his brothers, would leave the monastery to meet his sister for a day in order to transact business for their respective cloisters, and then return home before nightfall.

On one occasion, however, Scholastica asked her brother to stay the night at the shelter, that they might talk again the next morning. The monk refused, saying that he needed to return to the monastery. She entreated him again, saying that she wanted to talk about heaven with him. Again, he refused.

Seeing that she was not getting through to her brother, Scholastica wisely chose a different approach. Rather than continue arguing with her brother, she simply folded her hands, put down her head, and prayed to God to keep her brother with her. St. Gregory says,

“When she raised her head from the table, there broke forth such powerful lightning and thunder, and such a flood of rain, that neither the venerable Benedict nor the brothers with him could set foot outside the door [Benedict] was irritated and began to complain: ‘May God have mercy on you, Sister. Why have you done this?’ And she replied to him: ‘See, I asked you, and you would not listen to me. So I asked my Lord, and He has listened to me.’”

The next day, Benedict returned to the monastery, and three days later he saw a dove rise up to the sky outside his window. In that moment, he knew instinctively his beloved sister had died, and he was grateful to God that he had spent those last precious moments with her. St. Gregory concludes the story, “I have told this story about what the venerable man wanted but was unable to have. And when we examine his mind, there can be no doubt that he had wanted the sky to remain calm, as it had been when he had come down. But contrary to what he wanted, he found a miracle worked by a woman’s heart with the power of the omnipotent God. It is no wonder that the woman who had desired to see her brother that day proved at the same time that she was more powerful than he was. For as John says, ‘God is love,’ and according to that most just precept, [Scholastica] proved more powerful because she loved more.”¹²


Love, especially through acts of humble service, is the most powerful force in the universe because it reflects the very nature of God, who is Love itself.¹³ The full force of this love is not always immediately felt by those on whom it is bestowed; even so, when the tiniest seeds of love and faith are planted, then tended and nurtured patiently, they can move mountains.

In *Forming Friendship: Girl Genius Part 2*, we discussed the story in the *Gospel of John* where Mary, the sister of Martha, poured the expensive perfume over the feet of Jesus, and was loudly criticized by the disciples of Jesus, who did not understand the significance of what she was doing. “Let her alone,” Jesus told them. “Let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”¹⁴

12 Ruth Clifford Engs. “St. Scholastica: Finding Meaning in Her Story,” quoting St. Gregory the Great in *Dialogues*, Book II, Chapter XXXIII. <http://www.indiana.edu/~engs/scholas.htm>. Accessed October 20, 2014.

13 1 *John* 4:8.

14 *John* 12:7-8.



There may be times when God asks us to do things that, on the surface, don't make a lot of sense—and may involve making some kind of sacrifice, or even a little embarrassment. And yet, as St. Benedict taught his followers, “The first degree of humility is prompt obedience.”¹⁵ We must be ready to give our “yes” to God, and to ask Him for the strength to obey, even if we don't understand the reason He is asking us to act.

1. Can you think of a time when you knew the right thing to do, but you couldn't persuade the person in charge to agree to your plan? Does St. Scholastica's story speak to your situation?
2. “The first degree of humility is prompt obedience.”¹⁶ This quote reminds us that God won't always send the thunderstorm to give us the outcome we want. How does obeying the person in charge—even if you think you know a better way—help us grow in virtue? Can you think of a time when this happened to you?
3. “‘God is love,’ and according to that most just precept, [Scholastica] proved more powerful because she loved more.”¹⁷ In the modern world we do not often equate power with love (or humility). How does St. Scholastica's example of power in love relate to servant leadership? What are some practical ways you can practice doing this?
4. St. Scholastica did not make the thunderstorm appear; she simply asked God to intervene and trusted that if it was His will He would. How can we apply the lesson we learn from St. Scholastica in the way we lead?

15 Saint Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Chapter 5: On Obedience. <http://www.osb.org/rb/text/rbejms3.html>.

16 Ibid

17 Ruth Clifford Engs. “St. Scholastica: Finding Meaning in Her Story,” quoting St. Gregory the Great in *Dialogues*, Book II, Chapter XXXIII. <http://www.indiana.edu/~engs/scholas.htm>. Accessed 6 July 2014.

Thank You, God, for the gift of humility. Thank You for leading us along unexpected paths, and for giving us opportunities to show that we love You by putting people in our path who need our help. Help us to respond willingly to Your prompting and to have hearts ready to obey. And like St. Scholastica, help us to turn to You and to ask for help when we are unable to do what we think You have asked of us. In the sunshine, and in the storm, Jesus, we will trust in You. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen!

ACTIVITY TWO: PUZZLED ABOUT GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE?

Before Starting:

The leader will need to print off jigsaw puzzles for tonight's activity from EndowGroups.org/jigsawPuzzle. Cut each sheet of paper into smaller pieces to create a jigsaw puzzle out of each verse, and place each set in its own plastic sandwich bag. You can print one puzzle for each participant or divide into groups and work on the puzzles together. (If you want to make things even more interesting, use a different color for each verse, and mix all the verses together!)

Directions:

Being humble is about the little ways you can be Christ to others. We all have big ideas of what we want to do and where we want to go in life, but it all starts off small. Think about it – you yourself started life as a tiny embryo! Littleness matters! Your role in life matters! *You matter!*

For this activity, your leader will hand you each a handful of puzzle pieces. When she says start, the group has ten minutes to put the puzzle together.

Conclusion:

Before you put the puzzle together, your pieces might have seemed small and insignificant. But when they were a part of a bigger picture, they became important and integral to the whole puzzle. What would have happened if you just said, “Oh, my small pieces don’t matter,” and tossed them away?

In the same way, God will put opportunities in your life to serve others. They might seem small and insignificant to you. You might not get recognition for what you do. However, these opportunities might be a part of God’s bigger plan for you. Do not ignore the small chances! God sometimes hides big opportunities to change the world in small or even hidden deeds of faith. Do not miss it!

“Not all of us can do great things. But we
can do small things with great love.”

BL. MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Challenge

This week, let’s try to cultivate humility. How? First, let’s make a point to thank God when we are praised for something we do well—or even when we make a mistake or get called out for something we did wrong. We can praise Him for the gifts He has given, and when things go wrong, we can thank Him for opportunities to grow in humility. Next, let’s try to see the whole person. Not just their appearance, but all of the talents God has given them and their struggles too. Take a minute to appreciate who God created them to be and remember that their mission is not your mission. How can you build them up in their mission?

Lastly, let’s be open to instruction. We are surrounded by people who are more knowledgeable than us, and who specialize in different areas of intelligence or ability. Let’s allow others to share their strengths with us and to help us in our shortcomings.

Next week, each of us can be ready to share one way that we cultivated the virtue of humility week in a way that helped us become better servant leaders (Remember, it isn't bragging if it's an assignment!)

Something to Think About

“Do nothing from selfishness or conceit; but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus....”

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-5

Memorare

Remember,

*O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled
to thy protection,
implored thy help,
or sought thy intercession,
was left unaided.*

*Inspired by this confidence,
we fly unto thee,*

O virgin of virgins, our mother.

*To thee do we come,
before thee we stand,
sinful and sorrowful.*

*O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not our petitions,
but in your mercy hear
and answer us.*

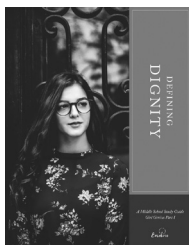
Amen.



Endow Youth Studies

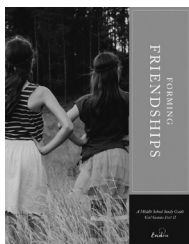
Endow Youth Studies guide young women on a transformative journey to discover their true identity as daughters of God. Through engaging readings, group discussions, dynamic activities, and prayer, they explore their unique role in the Church and society within the Catholic faith's rich intellectual tradition. These studies enhance faith understanding, cultivate virtue, and foster a vibrant interior life, ultimately aiming to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ, the source of their dignity.

THE ENDOW MIDDLE SCHOOL SERIES



GIRL GENIUS, PART I: Defining Dignity

This first study explores the teachings of Pope St. John Paul II on the feminine genius and the authentic dignity given to each young woman by God. The world often tries to convince young women that their dignity comes from external factors such as body type, hairstyle, clothes, athletic talents, or academic abilities. However, this study helps young women recognize that their intrinsic dignity is a free gift from God that can never be diminished, as it is rooted in their creation in His image and likeness.



GIRL GENIUS, PART II: Forming Friendships

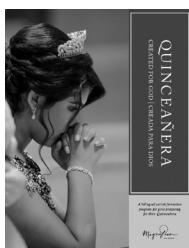
This study focuses on a young woman's natural ability to form meaningful friendships marked by depth and love. Young women will discover how they are called to act in union with their girl genius in prayer, relationships, and their interactions with others. Through the study of papal writings, young women will learn the qualities of a good friend and understand why Jesus is the perfect companion.



GIRL GENIUS, PART III: Loving Leadership

Being an authentic leader means caring for others. With this in mind, *Loving Leadership* helps girls recognize their unique call to leadership. True leaders understand their strengths and weaknesses, viewing their abilities as gifts from God. They also recognize that choosing to live for Christ is a daily decision. By helping young women understand and explore their roles as daughters of Christ, this study teaches them to embody their feminine genius at home, in school, at church, and in their communities.

QUINCEAÑERA BILINGUAL STUDY



QUINCEAÑERA CREATED FOR GOD | Creada para Dios

This 8–10-week bilingual parish formation program is for girls preparing for their Quinceañera. It seizes the moment of the Quinceañera to affirm young women in their identities as beloved daughters of God. Through reading and small group discussions, participants explore the spiritual significance of the Quinceañera tradition, gain insight into Catholic teachings, reflect on their dignity and feminine genius, and cultivate a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. This study empowers young Hispanic women to embrace their spiritual heritage with confidence and discover their potential within their families and communities.

THE ENDOW HIGH SCHOOL SERIES



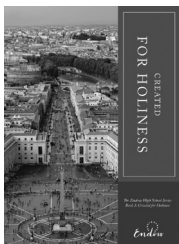
BOOK 1 | *CREATED FOR LOVE*

This study explores the dignity of every human person as created in the image and likeness of God. It introduces young women to the concepts of authentic love, true freedom, and the mystery of beauty. Grounded in Pope St. John Paul II's concept of the new feminism, as well as his writings on the feminine genius, *Created for Love* also introduces remarkable female figures including St. Edith Stein, St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Josephine Bakhita, and Mother Dolores Hart, among others. *Created for Love* will lead young women on a journey of encountering their identity as daughters of God, enabling them to grow in faith and virtue.



BOOK 2 | *CREATED FOR COMMUNITY*

This second study examines the question, 'What is Love?' through an exploration of C.S. Lewis' *Four Loves* and an introduction to Gary Chapman's *Five Love Languages*. It delves into the purpose of friendship and outlines how to identify a good friend. By presenting several holy friendships—St. Teresa of Ávila & St. John of the Cross, as well as St. Francis de Sales & St. Jane Frances de Chantal—the concept of true friendship is further defined. *Created for Community* concludes with an exploration of the difference between love and lust as it introduces the topic of dating with intention. This allows young women to understand the critical importance of surrounding themselves with those who desire what is best for them and will enable them to flourish.



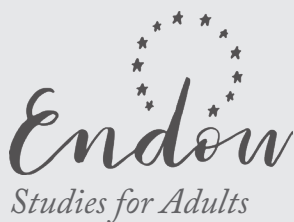
BOOK 3 | *CREATED FOR HOLINESS*

The third study of Endow's High School Series explores the concept of holiness through the lens of young people's thirst for greatness. The Beatitudes and the universal call to holiness are presented in connection to the idea that God has a plan for every human person from the moment of their creation. A discussion of state-in-life vocations (marriage, religious life, and single life) is contrasted with our culture's ideas of success, encouraging young women to develop their concept of personal fulfillment and begin to ponder their own unique vocation.



BOOK 4 | *CREATED FOR MISSION*

The final study in our High School Series reiterates the truth that God has created each human person for a unique purpose. It emphasizes how we can discover God's plan by growing in relationship with Him and connects each young woman's feminine genius to how God is calling her to live it out in our world. *Created for Mission* introduces the pillars of Catholic Social Teaching and presents the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as a foundation on which women can build their understanding of their own personal vocation. By learning about the lives of St. Catherine Drexel, St. Francis of Assisi, and others, young women will experience the beauty of a deepened interior life and will naturally begin to contemplate their unique, God-given mission even before they leave home for college.



Endow (Educating on the Nature and Dignity of Women) invites women to study writings of the popes, saints, and Doctors of the Church in small groups of faith and friendship. Through Endow groups, women encounter their identities as beloved daughters of God, grow in faith, and ultimately discover their mission in life.



Magnifica
por Endow
Spanish Language Studies

Many Endow studies are available in Spanish through our affiliate, Magnifica Grupos.

<https://magnificagrupos.org/>

*Visit www.endowgroups.org
to browse and purchase all studies.*

About Endow

Endow (Educating on the Nature and Dignity of Women) is a Catholic apostolate that calls women together to study important documents of the church. Through Endow groups, women encounter their identity as daughters of God, enabling them to grow in their faith and ultimately discover their mission in life.

Mission

Endow seeks to educate women toward a deeper, more profound understanding of their God-given dignity. Rooted in the teachings of Pope St. John Paul II, Endow affirms the genius of women—the feminine genius—and empowers them to fulfill our culture's desperate need for an authentic feminine presence in every aspect of life and society.

Endow attracts women of all ages, races, nationalities, and vocations and brings them together in small group communities of faith and friendship. We encourage women to recognize and cultivate their unique feminine genius through the study of papal and magisterial documents, as well as the lives and writings of the saints. Endow group members encounter the Catholic intellectual tradition together, sometimes for the very first time, and learn how to live the fullness of their feminine genius in their families, workplaces and communities.

History

Endow was founded in 2003 when three women—Betsy Considine, Marilyn Coors and Terry Polakovic—encountered the writings of Pope St. John Paul II on the new feminism. They quickly realized the impact of these life-changing truths and wanted all women to learn them too. With the help of Archbishop Charles Chaput, Archbishop José Gomez, and renowned Catholic scholar Sr. Prudence Allen, R.S.M., they began writing studies for use in small groups. These studies have enabled our participants—wives, mothers, single and consecrated women—to encounter the beauty and depth of the Church's teachings on womanhood. From its humble beginnings as a lunch-time conversation in Denver, Endow has grown into an international apostolate present in over 130 dioceses, impacting over 40,000 women worldwide.

Contributions

To keep Endow studies accessible to as many women as possible, our registration costs are supplemented by the generous gifts of our many supporters. Endow operates as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. Please consider joining our mission by donating at www.endowgroups.org/give. We would not be able to exist without our generous donors. *Deo gratias!*