

Heroic Leadership

In his book *Heroic Leadership* (Loyola Press), Chris Lowney explains that “what often passes for leadership today is a shallow substitution of technique for substance.” He explains that in the tradition of St. Ignatius of Loyola, leadership based on values and substance are highly preferable to flashy leadership styles. According to Lowney, these four leadership values are

- Self-awareness—Recognizing one’s own strengths, weaknesses, values, and worldview
- Ingenuity—Confidently innovating and adapting to a changing world
- Love—Engaging others with a positive, loving attitude
- Heroism—Energizing oneself and others through heroic ambitions

Think of three people in your life whom you consider excellent leaders, and jot down a few thoughts about how they exemplify these four values. Then, apply them to yourself as you reflect on your own leadership role.

Name of Leader	Self-Awareness	Ingenuity	Love	Heroism
Yourself				

What Kind of Collaborator Am I?

Collaboration requires time, freedom, effort, willingness, and listening, and it avoids internal competition, adversarialism, micromanagement, and controlling relationships. Take a moment to reflect on who you collaborate with (or should be collaborating with), what obstacles seem to be in the way, and how you rate as a collaborator yourself.

With whom do I currently collaborate most?

What makes this collaboration effective?

With whom should I be collaborating more?

What obstacles are preventing more effective collaboration?

When it comes to being a collaborator, how do I rate myself on the following skills?

1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

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| • I am an active listener who is willing to engage others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • I am a clear communicator. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • I am authentic in my expectations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • I foster structures that allow for collaboration. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • I am willing to lead by example. (I am a credible witness.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • I am adaptive and evolving. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • I am aware of the broad picture or common good of the whole. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • I am willing to delegate responsibilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • I am willing to empower others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My Plan for Growth

As a catechetical leader, you have many gifts and talents, and you also have room to grow. The *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers*, created by the Alliance for the Certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers and approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Commission on Certification and Accreditation, describes four formational categories that are applicable to catechetical leadership—human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral—and sets a standard for core competencies.

Review the description of each area of formation, and then write a brief plan for growing in that area.

Area of Formation	My Plan for Growth
<p>Human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The qualities of human maturity, character, and a healthy, well-balanced personality • The ability to manifest psychological health, marked by integrity, appropriate interpersonal boundaries, and the ability to honor and safeguard the trust that people place in me as a church minister 	
<p>Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hunger for holiness exhibited through practices, attitudes, and dispositions • The capacity for developing a spirituality sensitive to diverse cultural expressions based on conversion, communion, mission, and solidarity 	
<p>Intellectual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of Catholic theological studies and knowledge in ministry • The ability to integrate all areas of theology into ministerial practice, including Catholic social teaching for the transformation of church and society 	
<p>Pastoral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of leadership and pastoral skills for effective ministry • The capability of exercising a sound practice of compassionate pastoral care 	

From Whence Does Your Power Flow?

According to social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven, there are five bases of power (*Studies in Social Power*. Dorwin Cartwright [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959]). Read the description of each. Then jot down the initials of someone you know in a leadership position whose power tends to flow from that base. Finally, share whether you feel each form of power is appropriate to the role of catechetical leader, and why.

Base of Power	Initials	Appropriateness for Catechetical Leadership
<p>Legitimate — The belief that one has the formal right to make demands and expect others to be obedient because of his or her “office” or position</p>		
<p>Reward — The ability to compensate or reward another person for compliance or cooperation</p>		
<p>Expert — The possession of knowledge, skills, or information that others desire or need</p>		
<p>Referent — Charisma, perceived attractiveness, and a sense of being worthy and having a right to others’ respect</p>		
<p>Coercive — The belief that one can coerce people into compliance and punish them for noncompliance</p>		

Decision Making and Discernment

As a catechetical leader, you will sometimes face decisions that are complex and challenging. At such times, it is important to practice discernment. Take a moment to reflect on a decision you are presently facing, and apply the following steps of discernment to this issue.

Steps of Discernment	Apply the Step to Your Decision
<p>Identify the dilemma. Take some time to identify precisely what the problem is. Does it have to do with attitudes, lack of understanding, competition, or something else?</p>	
<p>Gather data. Gather the most important information needed. What key facts do you have or need to obtain?</p>	
<p>Start with what you know. Get to know your information. How did this happen? What led to this? What is the magnitude of the problem? Who else is involved? You may want to share the information with a group of people. Remember, you don't have to have all the answers. Never underestimate the wisdom found in a group!</p>	
<p>Identify alternatives. Ask yourself what other options are available. How many options are there?</p>	
<p>Make a list of pros and cons. Compile a list of the pros and cons that you can identify. Use a separate sheet of paper if you like.</p>	
<p>Ask for guidance. Take all you know into prayer. Write a few words asking the Holy Spirit to guide you and to lead you to God's will.</p>	
<p>Let God speak to you. Listen to your emotions and feelings. What do you hear? What keeps running in your mind?</p>	
<p>Choose among your options. Slowly review all the information you have. Are there any inconsistencies? What's the worst that could happen? What's the best that could happen? If needed, talk it over once again with a confidant.</p>	
<p>Make your decision and take action. Make your decision and write it here. After taking action, evaluate the fruits of your decision. Are there any parts of the decision that need a second look? Was the decision effective? Was anything learned? Did the decision lead people closer to God's will?</p>	

How Did Jesus Handle Conflict?

Sometimes making the tough call can lead to conflict or disagreement. Don't feel discouraged: Jesus dealt with conflict constantly. He encountered disagreements with others about God's Law, the Sabbath, traditions, and his own authority. Reflect on each of the following Scripture passages. What can you learn from how Jesus handled disagreements?

Scripture Passage	How Did Jesus Handle This Conflict?	What Can You Learn from This Example?
<p>Luke 9:46</p> <p>Summary:</p>		
<p>Luke 12:58</p> <p>Summary:</p>		
<p>Matthew 15:3–9</p> <p>Summary:</p>		
<p>Matthew 12:9–14</p> <p>Summary:</p>		
<p>John 4:7–10</p> <p>Summary:</p>		

A Catholic Way of Proceeding

A leader is not only someone who leads his or her people to a new “place,” but also someone who reassures them they will “get there” according to the core values and principles they hold dear. Catholic leadership must be unabashedly Catholic! In his book *Practice Makes Catholic* (Loyola Press, 2011), Joe Paprocki, DMin, proposes five unique characteristics of Catholic identity:

1. A sense of sacramentality
2. A commitment to community
3. A respect for the dignity of human life and a commitment to justice
4. A reverence for Scripture and Tradition
5. A disposition to faith and hope, not despair (xi)

Here is an exercise to help you and a group of people get in touch with these characteristics of Catholic identity. Imagine that you’ve been called in as a creative consultant by a Hollywood director who tells you that the film he is working on needs to be more “Catholic.” In other words, he needs the set (the home of a married Catholic couple) to look more Catholic and the characters to act more Catholic—to do things or say things that would be uniquely Catholic. Together with your group, brainstorm your suggestions for making the set look more Catholic and the characters act more Catholic. When you are done, connect each example to one or more of the above characteristics of Catholic identity.

How to make the set—the home of a married Catholic couple—look more Catholic:

How to make the characters act and sound more Catholic: