



SOUND LEADERSHIP

Leadership Curriculum for Music Students

For band, orchestra, and choir

by **SCOTT LANG**



Strengthen Your Student Leadership Program

Let your students take ownership of their own learning and leading through *Sound Leadership*, a leadership method book for band, choir, and orchestra students. This book is designed to help facilitate an engaging and collaborative process between both student leaders and program directors that allows for self-discovery, goal-setting, and defining roles and responsibilities.

As a part of this book, students will process through:

- Personal leadership inventory
- Task assessment and job creation
- Situational discussion starters
- Complete leadership team assessment
- Leadership contract
- Leadership performance review
- Specific and strategic goal-setting activity

Workbook (00-47892)..... \$12.99

Self-Evaluation

The goal for the *Sound Leadership* workbook is based less in teaching concepts than it is in asking students the right questions—so they can have their own “Aha!” moments. Students will begin by evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, so they can step up to the roles that allow them to lead and serve with their natural talents.



UNIT 1 | YOURSELF

2 YOUR BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Without going into great detail, suffice it to say that I believe that the person you are is, by and large, the person you will likely always be. Yes, you will grow. Yes, you will experience many things. Yes, you will become more seasoned and educated. But will you fundamentally change as a person? Probably not.

As people, leaders, musicians, and students, we all have “strengths and weaknesses.” But there is something about that term that doesn’t convey the inner parts of us that are fixed or unchanging. So instead, I like to think of strengths and weaknesses as blessings and curses. For example:

- I am more patient now than when I was 16, but I am still impatient by nature.
- I am more empathetic now than when I was 16, but I am still not empathetic by nature.
- I am a better listener now than I was when I was 16, but I am still not a good listener by nature.
- I am more focused now, but I am still easily distracted by nature.

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Lead by Example

Your students will evaluate how their “blessings and curses” have effected their choices in the past, and the effect they have had on their peers—both positive and negative.

UNIT 1 | YOURSELF

3 LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

Now that we have an understanding of your “blessings and curses” it’s time to see how they have impacted your choices and actions in the past. This can be an uncomfortable but important process as we look to the mirror and see if you are the person others want you to be—or more importantly, if you are the person that you want to be.

ARE YOU A GOOD ROLE MODEL?

From the moment we are born, we learn by watching. We learned to walk, talk, eat, and play by watching others and modeling their behavior.

Educationally speaking, it is the most efficient and expedient way to teach someone something.

Musically speaking, the same holds true. Would you rather have an articulation described for you to figure it out—or played for you to model after? Would you rather read and assimilate a chapter on good marching technique, or have someone show you how to march? Would you rather have someone to explain how to assemble/maintain/clean your instrument, or show you how to do it?

UNIT 2 | YOUR TEAM

5 LEADERSHIP TEAM ASSESSMENT

Prior to preparing any future plan, it is important to know your starting point so you can measure your growth. As a part of this process, it’s also important to note what is working really well and needs to be left alone.

Take some time to consider the questions and answer them thoroughly and honestly. This is not a gripe session, just a chance to know your group’s strengths and weaknesses. Try to set aside situations involving individuals and focus on the group as a whole.

To read and complete this section of the course will take some time (approximately 30–45 minutes) so be sure you have the time to complete it before starting.

Key Takeaway

These assessments and the subsequent discussion of them should give you a good idea about your starting point, both as a program and as its leadership team. As you process all of the answers, focus on coming to a consensus on where you are currently and where you would like to be when the process is done. In other words, you are striving for a common point of origination and a destination. When these two things have been discussed fully, you will be well on your way toward being a more effective leadership team.

QUESTIONS

Rate the following statement: **Our leadership team is cohesive and active.**

12345

STRONGLY DISAGREESTRONGLY AGREE

Our previous leadership team’s strengths were:

Our previous leadership team’s weaknesses were:

In the past, the people on the leadership team have been people who displayed the following trait(s) (circle all that apply):

dedication	compassion	care	commitment	initiative
character	vision	risk-taking	ownership	cynicism
sarcasm	anger	patience	laziness	power
hunger/drive	shyness	humor	meanness	honesty
productivity	a strong work ethic			

UNIT 2 | YOUR TEAM 21

Goal Setting

Each student, as well as the leadership team as a whole, are encouraged to set goals for themselves and the ensemble. Students will also identify growth indicators that are cause for celebration—a great aid in injecting energy and motivating others.

Pick three goals you would like the leadership team to consider for the upcoming year:

Goal #1

Timeline: _____

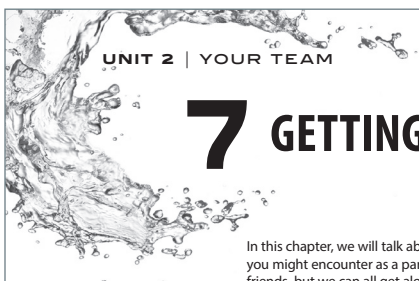
Specific actions required for success: _____

People responsible: _____

Notes: _____

Getting Along

Students will assess and identify their own personality type and how it is perceived by others—sparking conversations about what measures to take to help the leadership team become cohesive.



UNIT 2 | YOUR TEAM

7 GETTING ALONG

In this chapter, we will talk about how to deal with the different types of people you might encounter as a part of your leadership role. We can't all be best friends, but we can all get along!

The ability to get along with others on the leadership team is an important prerequisite for leadership and for life. This is not to say that all leaders have to be gregarious and outgoing people who enjoy being in the presence of others—but that they are secure enough in their role and views to be comfortable with different opinions and leadership styles.


Power struggles are not uncommon among leadership teams. Grounded in ego and fear, people seek to place themselves in dominant roles to the benefit of themselves and the detriment of others. This “me” mentality is as destructive of a disease as any that can afflict a group. Your peers are often caught up in the pettiness and choose sides, escalating and widening the conflict. Just remember, **your value comes not from your strength but from your service!**

THE SIDE OF LEADERSHIP

There is no manual or handbook to know when to lead and when to follow, but if you need to err on one side, I would encourage you to **err on the side of leadership**. Yes, this is the more uncomfortable of the two choices, but it is also the most impactful.

Knowing when to “step up” and when to “step away” is rarely an easy decision. The reason most students choose inaction over action is what we covered in the intro of this chapter: Music culture has trained the leadership right out of you.

Finding a balance between knowing when to lead and when to follow is a struggle for most student leaders. The following questions are designed to help leaders and directors explore this important issue and come to a consensus.



QUESTIONS

On a scale of 1–5, how comfortable are you as a leader taking risks in front of the group?

1	2	3	4	5
NOT COMFORTABLE AT ALL			VERY COMFORTABLE	

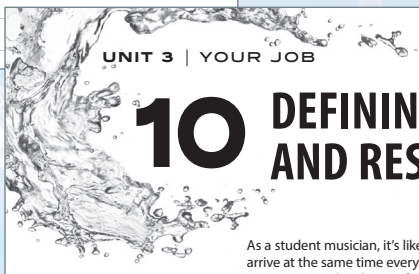
Why?

Taking Initiative

The Taking Initiative section identifies the difference between being a leader and a follower. *Sound Leadership* helps your students discern what good leaders do, when to take the initiative, and when to follow their director's lead.

Defining Responsibilities

The book provides the opportunity for leaders and students to define the roles and responsibilities needed in your ensemble. *Sound Leadership* provides strategies to prevent problems by establishing clear communication and plans, as well as developing problem-solving skills in your student leaders through the use of situational questions and self-evaluation worksheets.



UNIT 3 | YOUR JOB

10 DEFINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a student musician, it's likely that your days are filled with the “known.” You arrive at the same time every day, sit in the same place, play the same music, etc. Most people take comfort and enjoy the routine.

THE THREE C'S

In the same way, people need and appreciate **consistency, clarity, and concreteness** in a leader.

Consistency: People thrive best when they are under the stewardship of a consistent and dependable leader. Someone who is as dependable as they are predictable. This way, your fellow students know what type of person they are dealing with and what the expectations are. Are you someone who is happy one minute and mad the next? Do you have a volcanic leadership style that leaves your followers wondering which one of your many sides they will be dealing with today? If so, this may be an opportunity for personal and professional growth.

What are growth indicators (musical/visual/sectional/personal) that can be celebrated in the following intervals?

Daily: _____

Weekly: _____

What are some energizing games we played at the start that we could play again throughout the season?

Avoiding Burn-Out

In order to help your students avoid burn-out and to embrace the day-to-day “grind” of their roles, a section is included on brainstorming metrics of growth that can be celebrated, along with energizing activities to use throughout the semester.

UNIT 3 | YOUR JOB

13 TYPICAL PROBLEMS

As a leader, every problem and situation is unique, not because of the problem itself, but because of the people and circumstances involved. While I don't believe that there are any universal answers to individual situations, experience tells us that there are some common problems that most groups face.

In this section, you will read about four typical problems, then answer a series of reflection questions to help you troubleshoot each one.

PROBLEM #1: TIME

This refers to tardiness or general absenteeism. This is the most prolific problem any large group faces. Typically, it is a small minority of people who commit the largest infractions. It can be assumed that your schedule is posted well in advance and is readily known, so people who are chronically absent/tardy are doing so not because of lack of information but due to a lack of personal accountability.

What are three rules that are most often violated in your group?

What things can you do to specifically address these violations?

For this year, or section, who are you most likely to struggle with this year?

Conflict Resolution

It is important for a leadership team to have a clear understanding of what your policy is on student discipline. The Problem People and Typical Problems sections help your student leaders proactively and clearly define the expectations of the ensemble members in order to help prevent conflict.

Your Tools

The last unit of the book is called Your Tools and contains a list of self-reflection questions to facilitate important discussions and dive deeper into issues, as well as a list of activities to make rehearsals more fun.

UNIT 4 | YOUR TOOLS

15 ACTIVITIES TO MAKE REHEARSALS MORE FUN

LEADERSHIP APPLICATION

Welcome and thank you for showing an interest in being a part of the Student Leadership Team. We hope you will find the application process to be interesting and enriching regardless of the outcome. This application represents a significant departure from the standard way of selecting student leaders. In addition, some leadership positions have been added or removed to better fit the current organization. If you have any questions about the process or your application, please do not hesitate to contact your director at any time. Good luck, and work hard to best represent yourself through this process.

Your candidacy will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Past performance
2. Quality of your application
3. Future leadership potential
4. Best fit for the individual and organization

1. Have a "Christmas in July" party at band camp.
2. Organize a group of kids to play Christmas carols and go caroling one night. You can also carol to your administrators and the district office.
3. Submit a band announcement for the school marquee.
4. Visit a nursing home together.
5. Find a "pen pal" section in a band in another state or country, and start a message board with them.

Additional Resources

The last unit also includes a leadership pledge, personal review, and leadership application, helping prepare your students to take on the responsibilities of being in a leadership position.

**SOUND INNOVATIONS****FLEXIBLE & COMPREHENSIVE**

Sound Leadership is part of Alfred Music's Sound Innovations method series, with authors Robert Sheldon, Peter Boonshaft, Bob Phillips, Dave Black, Chris Bernotas, Brian Beck, Scott Watson, Kirk Moss, Stephen Benham, Matt Turner, Scott Lang, Aaron Stang, Bill Purse, and Jason Yeary. The most comprehensive method available, you can teach beginners through college with the same approach. Now with five levels available each for concert band and string orchestra, three for guitar, one for percussion, and sight-reading books for concert band. Access to SmartMusic and SI Online will provide your students opportunities for deliberate practice.

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