



CHARACTER FOR LEADERS

Dynamic Leadership Essential One

Dynamic leaders are positive leaders; individuals who uphold the underlying values of our society and our organization. National FCCLA is a partner of CHARACTER COUNTS!

(www.charactercounts.org). This campaign promotes the aspects of character that young people need to become strong leaders in families, careers, and communities. The Six Pillars of Character are:

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship

Leadership Achievement

CHARACTER COUNTS! for Leaders

Who you are makes a difference! Dynamic leaders are persons of good character.

- They know the difference between right and wrong and always try to do what is right.
- They are good people, someone to look up to and admire.
- They set a good example for everyone.
- They make the world a better place.
- They live according to the six pillars of character.

Character counts for leaders. Character is what you do when no one else is looking. It is the "secret ingredient" inside the best leaders. The most dynamic leaders have learned and practiced the six pillars of character. These traits help them succeed in families, careers, and communities.

Dynamic leaders have high standards and positive attitudes. They tell the truth, keep promises, and have the moral courage to stand up for their beliefs, even when it is hard to do so. They respect others and themselves. They accept responsibility and do what they are supposed to do. Dynamic leaders are fair and play by the rules. They care about others and are considerate and forgiving. They cooperate and build a better community.

****Remember:**

Use any of the FCCLA national programs, Competitive Events or STAR Events to practice your Dynamic Leadership skills!

- Career Connection
 - Leaders at Work
- Community Service
- F.A.C.T.S.
- Families First
- Financial Fitness
- Power of One
- STOP the Violence
- Student Body



Build Character for Leadership Achievement

You can be a dynamic leader with good character. First, rate your Character for **Dynamic Leadership** with the attached **Self Test (Attachment 1)**. Then, complete activities to build character. Share them with your FCCLA adviser.

Find even more opportunities to develop good character in FCCLA. Take the lead, gain experience, and live by the six pillars of character. Prepare for dynamic leadership in families, careers, and communities.

Character Building Projects for Leadership Achievement

Here are 10 things you can do to become a leader with good character. See how many you can complete. Ask your adviser about earning recognition for your character building activities.

- Write a list of the responsibilities you have at home. Also list other family members' responsibilities. Be a family leader by arranging to take over one more responsibility from someone else. *Optional:* Create a Power of One Family Ties project from this activity.
- Experience citizenship by working on an FCCLA project in the community. Take responsibility for some part of a Community Service program project.
- Make a **Character Contract for Leaders (Attachment 2)** for yourself. Find out what to do to live by the six pillars of character. Write out a contract saying you will do these things. Sign the contract. Give a copy to a parent or someone else who will remind you to be a person of good character. Post the contract in your room and look at it every day.
- For one week, keep a respect journal. Write in the journal every day. Describe times when you show respect to others. Describe times others show respect to you. Write about what respect is and why it is important for leaders. At the end of the week, share your journal with an adult and talk about what you learned.
- Be a responsibility sleuth! Look for examples of responsible young people in your school and community. Search newspapers and magazines for stories about young leaders who act responsibly. (Remember to look in school newspapers and *Teen Times*, the national FCCLA magazine!) Clip out the stories and make a collage of them. Ask to display it in the Family and Consumer Sciences room.
- Create a work of art that shows one of the six pillars of character. It might be a drawing, sculpture, fabric art, collage, or mobile. Don't use any words, just use symbols and pictures. Display your artwork at an FCCLA chapter meeting. Explain how it relates to character and leadership.
- Write catchy reminders and tips that explain how to build character by being involved in FCCLA. Arrange for the tips to be read on the school announcements or printed in the daily bulletin. Make and display posters inviting students to build character and leadership by joining FCCLA.
- Write a TV-style commercial to "sell" one of the six pillars of character. Convince young people that using this pillar will improve their lives and make them dynamic leaders. Perform your



commercial for other Family and Consumer Sciences students. Or, videotape it and show it on the in-school TV station.

- Prove your character by serving in a leadership role in your FCCLA chapter. Write a report about how you live up to the six pillars of character as a leader. Share it with your FCCLA adviser and ask for her or his opinions about how you could do even better.
- Choose a career that interests you. Investigate how leaders in that career demonstrate the six pillars of character. (You might interview someone in the career, read stories about career leaders, or observe the career in real life or videos.) Report what you learn to your FCCLA adviser and FACS students.

Leadership Excellence

Living Up to Ethical Leadership

"One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes.... In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility." –Eleanor Roosevelt

Dynamic leaders are persons of good character. They tell the truth, keep promises, and have the moral courage to stand up for their beliefs, even when it is hard to do so. They respect others and themselves. They accept responsibility and do what they are supposed to do. Dynamic leaders are fair and play by the rules. They care about others and are considerate and forgiving. They cooperate and build a better community.

Ethics Demonstrate Character

Dynamic leaders show good character through their positive ethics. Ethics is the study of conduct and moral judgment. Ethical leaders demand the best behavior from themselves and others. They take responsibility for their choices and actions. They understand that leading is serving. Their decisions and actions reflect good character and the values and principles for which their organization stands.

Key Elements of Ethical Leadership

- **Consciousness.** What you do as a leader makes a difference and has an impact. Always remember: your actions have ethical dimensions.
- **Choice.** Each choice you make as a leader reflects your view of what is ethical. Ethical decisions are based on facts and a consideration of what is right and wrong. When faced with difficult decisions with no clear-cut "right" answer, leaders must decide what is more right than wrong. The decision is guided by personal ethics and the values and principles of the organization you represent.
- **Courage.** You need courage to stand up for your beliefs and do what needs to be done as an ethical leader. It's easier if you constantly practice the six pillars of character. It might also help to adopt a creed for ethical courage. Here is an example: "In a cynical ... world, I realize that it



takes courage to be ethical. I resist the temptation to be less than ethical, even when 'everyone is doing it.' I regard honest people as heroes, not fools." *

- **Commitment.** To be successful as an ethical leader, you need commitment to ideals that are bigger than you or your organization. Take time to ponder what is truly important in life. Seek wisdom from others you respect. Then, commit to applying these priorities to your dynamic leadership in families, careers, and communities.

[Sources: Concepts adapted from "Components of Personal Ethical Leadership," Wilmetter, IL: Ethical Leadership Group, 1996.]

[*Quoted from Sheila Murray Bethel, "Work to Pass the Leadership Quiz for the New Millennium: Courage and Change," Communiqué, Winter 1999.]

Build Character for Leadership Excellence

You can be a dynamic leader who excels in good character and positive ethics. Ethical leadership brings personal fulfillment, deeper trust from others, and expanded opportunities to make a positive difference in the world. Undertake a **Dynamic Leadership** project to develop your character for leadership excellence.

Use the FCCLA Planning Process to create a project that builds character for dynamic leadership. Try one of the following ideas, or create your own.

- **Character Campaign** Introduce your fellow youth leaders to CHARACTER COUNTS!, a nationwide effort to promote good character. Ask them to base their leadership on trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. (The **Character Contract for Leaders (Attachment 2)** may help in your campaign.) Write a monthly newspaper article about local youth projects that demonstrate good character.
- **Practicing Ethics** Look in books on leadership and ethics for ideas to develop a list of situations or problems that challenge personal and leadership ethics. Use the sample ethical challenges to lead a session with fellow FCCLA members. Have members role play responses to the challenges. Lead a discussion about the consequences of ethical and unethical choices. Challenge members to commit to positive ethics. (You might ask them to sign the **Character Contract for Leaders (Attachment 2)**.)
- **Character for Family Leaders** Explore how character is influenced by families. Research family influence on personality development at different ages. Create a presentation that reminds young parents of their role in helping children develop good character. (You might adapt the **Character Contract for Leaders (Attachment 2)** to be used by parents.) Arrange to give your presentation to parenting classes that are offered in your community. Prepare a news release that summarizes the presentation. Send it to a local paper.
- **Words of Wisdom** Research the role of character and ethics in effective leadership. Develop a STAR Events Illustrated Talk about the ways FCCLA members can develop character and ethics for strong leadership in families, careers, and communities.



- **Character at Work** Take the lead to make your workplace more caring and respectful. First, look in CHARACTER COUNTS! materials to learn what it takes to show respect and caring. Then, observe interactions between co-workers and between employees and customers. Identify which aspects of respect and caring are most often lacking from these interactions. Encourage co-workers to improve these aspects of character. Use posters, stories, newsletter articles, and reminders during meetings. Share results with your FCCLA chapter.
- **Citizens with Character** Explore what it means to be a good citizen in your community. Learn about local government, and observe a city council meeting. Send letters to local government leaders, explaining why character is important and how young people develop character in FCCLA. Expand this project to fit guidelines for **Power of One** or **STAR Events**.

FCCLA National Programs

The following FCCLA national programs offer even more opportunities to develop character for leadership excellence.

- Community Service
- Leaders at Work
- Power of One: "A Better You"
- STAR Events
- STOP the Violence