

Qualities required for a leader of the SGYW

What is a leader?

Often, when referring to a leader, one thinks of someone who has climbed up the ladder and is above others, with all the rights to command at will.

The Gospel's concept of the leader, and therefore the Schoenstatt concept, points precisely to the opposite:

"Whoever wants to be first, let him be the servant of all." Mt 20:27.

Thinking of our Ver Sacrum Patris ideal, we can ask ourselves again – **What is a leader?**

In challenging times...Called & chosen – educated – sacrificed – sent out

Why is this important?

The goal of Schoenstatt's personality formation is to form "leader personalities". These are individuals who can stand their own in the midst of the world, not swayed by the crowd, but rather having an uplifting or *sursum corda* impact on their surroundings. In other words, when we speak about leaders and leadership as SGYW, it is really the type of personality to which all Schoenstatters should aspire, whether they are elected or appointed leaders within their groups or branch, or not.

Looking at our task as leaders, we want to keep in mind that this is the ideal we aspire to embody in order to be a credible witness to the ideal for those who are entrusted to our care, for the girls whom we are to educate to become, themselves, leader personalities.

What is the attitude of a leader?

The leader is the bearer of authority, but of an inner authority that is gained through selfless service to those whom God has placed in her care.

The leader must be a reflection of Mary to those entrusted to her. The fundamental attitude of the Blessed Mother is:

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word." Lk. 1:38

In other words, her attitude was that of simple service, deeply rooted in and in the hands of God.

"The essence of the Blessed Virgin was and is to serve life selflessly" J.K.

When Father Kentenich took over the position of Spiritual Director in the seminary, he told the young men:

"I place myself at your disposal with all that I am and all that I have, with my knowledge and my ignorance, with my ability and my inability, but above all, my heart." (J.K., Prefounding Doc., 10-27-1912)

"How can strength come from me, if I do not strive vigorously to master myself?" J. K.

"I sanctify myself for them." (Jn. 17:19)

What kind of leader do I want to be?

Therefore, in evaluating my leadership ideal and qualities, I should not strive to be merely the most sympathetic or the friendliest, the most organized or the most courageous, but the one who possesses the inner qualities of a leader according to my own original way of being.

Summary of the characteristics of a leader:

(a) Ability to unite:

- respect for others
- ability to welcome
- ability to make personal contact

b) Spirit of responsibility:

- she takes her role seriously, with all that the mission entails, renouncing personal desires, personal likes and dislikes, for the sake of the common good.

c) Vital grasp of Schoenstatt:

- She must be imbued with the Schoenstatt spirituality and the covenant of love, or at least have the desire to grow more deeply into it.

d) Spirit of service:

- She strives to do everything for the good of others.
- She sees her companions, those beneath her care, and also her authorities not as rivals, but as collaborators in a common work for the glory of God.

e) Ability to lead, to show the way:

- The group must always have goals, otherwise it will become stagnant. The leader must be able to look ahead, to motivate and open new horizons for others.
- At the same time, she must be able to be guided by the authorities within the branch, the moderator, the other adult collaborators, and above all, by the authority of the *mens fundatoris* (the thinking and principles of the founder).

f) Clarity of ideas:

- The leader is responsible for the group to enter more deeply into the spirituality and understanding of Schoenstatt and for this, she must be very clear about where she is leading.
- She must be oriented in Schoenstatt's principles according to the thinking and desires of the founder, and want to know them better in order to transmit his spirit to those under her care.

g) Demands in one's own formation:

- One can only make demands on others when one makes demands on oneself. One can only educate others when one educates oneself. The growth or stagnation of the group depends on my PERSONAL STRIVING FOR HOLINESS.