Defining Leadership through the lens of middle school students-

What does it mean to lead or to be a leader?

In the words and the concepts of Ditmas students:

Ariana Arias:

I believe that what separates a person from the rest as a leader is that the person creates new ways of doing things. The leader does what he or she pleases. The leader does not let others’ comments deter her or him from becoming the person the leader wants to become. The leader is unashamed of individual beliefs. Yet the leader does not force others to share those beliefs. The leader does not force others to feel the same as the leader feels. The leader does not make others feel guilty if they do not share his or her beliefs. The leader looks to help others and invents ways to do that. The leader does not allow individual creations and beliefs to be tainted by others.

Mayada Ahmed: I think that I am a leader. I like to get my own way. Truly, I can be a bossy person sometimes. In addition, I also sometimes manipulate others to get my own way.

Taha Nuha: I am a leader because I am the one that generates my ideas. Following them to completion is my greatest accomplishment. So far, my greatest accomplishment at age eleven is being elected Vice President of my elementary school. I rose to that level in elementary school because of my academic remarks and speaking voice. I feel that even if you are not an elected official, you should not allow others ideas to define your own.

Nushaba Nashir: I think what makes a person a leader is that the person has ideas and gives instructions to others. Leaders do listen to others, but they also act to help others by leading them. The leader is open to other opinions about what course of action to take. Within my family, I feel my sister is a leader since she helps the family out.

Genesis Lopez: I see my mother as a leader. Not only does she serve as the leader of my life, but she also leads in my brothers’ lives. I am a leader of my own life in that I direct my own actions to achieve my goals.

Nayeli Saldivar: I am a leader. What constitutes a leader is that the leader has individual personal ideas.

Kiare Bowen: In my view, a leader does not care what others think at all. Do I consider myself a leader? Yes, I do. I am not like other people at all. I do get my own ideas.

Nayeli Marin: What makes a person a leader? Something that defines leadership is the ability to take control and responsibility. The leader is able to guide others to help them make the right choices. A leader is someone who supports persons in decision making and encourages them to keep moving ahead.

Am I a leader or a follower? I consider myself a leader. In difficult situations, I will if I have to, take control and responsibility. I will also help other people in difficult situations. Not only will I help those people I know, but I will also help those persons I do not know. Everyone deserves to be cared about, heard from and lead in a positive direction. As a leader, I want to help persons make correct decisions for their future.

Humayara Afrin: Some qualities of leaders are dedication, confidence, perseverance, and good intentions. Leaders help society to change for the good. I see my older brother as our family leader because of his grades, awards, and salutatorian address.

Nia Kisher: I think a leader is someone who is not afraid to put himself or herself out there. The leader is a person who is prepared, confident and motivated. I also feel realistically that anyone can be a leader, if that person has the right mindset.

Tanisha Hossen: What makes a person a leader? Somebody who can solve many problems or find solutions. Someone who is responsible. Someone who takes initiative to lead all to success or to goals.

Do you consider yourself a leader or a follower?

I consider myself a leader because I can put aside my shyness to help bring everyone to success. I believe that everyone can be a leader if the individual has the right confidence and mindset. At times, I feel myself become a follower, because my shyness can sometimes take control of my personality. However, I am continually working on that shyness so my true leadership spirit can take hold and help guide others.

Elijah Carswell: Being a leader means that you help other people. I think of myself as a leader. I think my talent is speaking. I can speak at various settings.

Emma Manzanal: There are many different leaders. There are also many ways to lead. A leader is someone who stands up for what he or she believes in. A leader uses power to help people who do not have as much power as the leader does. The leader tries to do what is right for others.

I do not see myself as a leader, but I do like to help people. However, I do not like to talk in crowds.

Liam David: What makes a person a leader is their ability to rally others to a cause or to unite others toward achieving a common goal.

Fiza Kamran:

A leader is a person that people follow. One can be a leader for the good or be a leader for the bad. If a leader leads for the good, persons will follow him or her. If the leader leads for negative goals, there is a chance he or she will not be re-elected. A leader can also be a person that many young people can look up to as a role model. Leaders are also problem solvers in tough situations.

Tamisa Rahman: There are many different characteristics of leadership. In my perspective, being a leader means being able to guide others and serving as a role model for them. The leader is a person who takes action and stands up for what he or she believes in. A person who does not run away from problems, but stays to find a solution for them is a leader. The leader is determined, motivated and works to exceed expectations.

I work hard and I work to exceed my own expectations, not those of others.

Alishah Akbar: A leader is a problem solver. A leader is someone who everyone can look up and admire. On the other hand, the leader is someone who can own mistakes. Anyone can be a leader, if the individual is brave enough to do it.

Kyra Farkas: A leader is someone who guides people, fights for change, and helps people in various ways. In my family, my grandfather is a leader who makes changes in people’s lives for the best.

Ermine Toussant: I believe I am a leader because I believe in my rights. I will allow no one to stop me doing what I love. I am very original. I love improving my vocabulary by adding various words. I was the recipient of many academic and character awards in elementary school which makes me a leader. I received awards for honesty, courage and diligence.

Kaylyn Clark: What makes a person a leader? In my view, it is doing good things that make them stand out. The leader helps others when they fall down and helps them with their problems. Leaders always try their best.