

# **Freefall**

## **Living Leadership**

Volume One  
Facilitator's Guide

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Dear Youth Worker,

Welcome to the amazing world of developing student leaders. LeaderTreks has been working with student leaders for over 10 years. In that time, we have become convinced about several important factors relating to student leadership development. For example:

We often underestimate the potential of students. Students are capable of so much more than what adults often entrust to them. Although it is a scary thing to let a student lead in the truest sense (not to mention humbling), the sacrifice is well worth it. When we start to dream big dreams for our students, we create an environment that allows them to reach their full potential.

Allowing students to fail is a key to success. Students learn the most important life lessons through failure. Adults are often afraid students won't trust them if they are allowed to fail. Yet students crave these opportunities. Understand that when a student comes to the end of his or her rope, that student is most ready to learn.

As you discuss the concepts in this book with your students, you will learn much about yourself and them. Your understanding of the potential of students will increase. When you expect more from them, they will grow. However, be prepared for tough times as well. The road to developing leaders is often rocky and hard. Stick with it. Your efforts are worth it. The greater the cost, the greater the reward.

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P.S. If we can help you in any way regarding your student leaders, please email us.

## Introduction

Skydiving is an inherently dangerous sport. Thrill-seekers strap a parachute on their backs and jump from a plane or other high point to enjoy a few seconds of freefall. Much can go wrong; unpredictable wind currents, equipment failure, and overconfidence can lead to tragic results. It takes experience and skill to navigate these dangers. Leadership is full of danger too. Great leaders don't fear risk. They learn to manage it through knowledge and experience.

Nehemiah was a prominent leader in his country. As cup bearer to the king, he enjoyed the prestige and honor of the highest office for a foreigner in this government. Knowing the risks, he gambled it all on a chance to do a great thing for God.

What if we embraced the risks of leadership for God? What if we took the plunge? Nothing can stop a leader in freefall.

- In **River Running: Leadership in Motion**, students define basic leadership skills and learn how to develop them. This study focuses on the essential activities leaders do. Students push off from the shore on a rafting adventure that takes them through increasingly difficult Class I to Class IV "rivers" to uncover the skills necessary to succeed in leadership.
- **Avalanche: Unstoppable Leadership**, exposes the heart of the leader—what leaders look like from the inside out. Backcountry skiers know that avalanches are the inevitable result of specific conditions, like wind speed and sudden temperature drops. Likewise, certain conditions are necessary for the making of a leader. Once those 10 conditions are in place, powerful leaders are developed and they become "dangerous" unstoppable forces in God's Kingdom.
- **Freefall: Living Leadership** teaches students how to live as leaders in everyday situations. Jumping out of an airplane with a parachute strapped to your back creates a powerful feeling of adrenaline and excitement verging on recklessness. Skydivers embrace this risk and, through their skill, learn to overcome it. Leadership is by its very nature about risk. Therefore, leaders must learn how to control and overcome these risks. Living

## What Is the Becoming a Leader Series About?

We designed the Becoming a Leader series with you in mind. LeaderTreks was started by a group of former youth pastors who know the joys and frustrations of developing student leaders. We also know the problems with most curriculum. Often, a youth worker must sort through the mass of content to find the nuggets of good material. It can be difficult to adapt the curriculum to your setting and your situation. Sometimes using curriculum is more work than doing it on your own!

This series is our solution to that problem.

We created the Becoming a Leader series to help you nurture the leaders in your group. We want to help you become an expert in leadership development by providing you with time-tested, proven tools you can use right away in your ministry. At the same time, we hope we have created a tool flexible enough to fit your needs.

So what makes this book different from the average discipleship book? First of all, this isn't your average discipleship book. In fact, we at LeaderTreks don't think of it as discipleship at all. We're setting the standard for student leadership development in a Biblical context. That's why LeaderTreks believes:

**-Leadership can be learned.** Leadership is not something some students are just born with like a personality trait. It is a teachable skill. Anyone, at any time can exercise leadership when the proper principles are applied.

**-Everyone can benefit from learning about leadership.** Not every student is a natural leader, but every student can learn about becoming a leader. By identifying areas of their lives that need growth, students become better people, creating better leaders.

**-Leadership changes everything.** The development of leaders is vital to God's plan to change the world. He chooses to use us and gives us chances to lead. We need to equip students to be ready for those opportunities

We believe that every effective leader balances two aspects of leadership: Doing and Being. Book One, River Running: Leadership in Motion focuses on the "doing" side of leadership. It is one of several books in the series about how leaders influence those around them by what they do. Book Two, Avalanche: Unstoppable Leadership represents the "being" aspect to leadership by showing how leaders influence others by who they are in a study of character traits. The entire series helps students grow by balancing learning how leaders act and learning who a leader is.

## Who Should Use the Becoming a Leader series?

Those who work with students will want to use this series in a variety of contexts:

- with existing leadership teams
- as part of an existing weekly program
- in a small group of key students

Students in the study will also want to talk about what they are learning with their family and other friends. Often, others can see qualities in their leadership abilities that they cannot. Encourage learning from each other.

Challenge your students to risk, dream, dare and most of all think throughout this journey-think about what God wants them to learn about themselves and their ability to influence those around them.

## How Does It Work?

When students open this book and begin their journey, they'll find ten key items packed inside their "chute" for this adventure. Together we will explore six key attributes of leadership that are central to becoming a better person and a great leader. Sure, we could have included other things—it's not an exhaustive list. However, each study will prove highly useful in helping you maximize your effectiveness as a leader.

The Adult Leader's Guide is designed to be used in conjunction with the Student Guide. Each chapter in the Student Guide is divided into sections:

- *Discovery Questions* are designed to help you examine the leadership principle in relation to your life.
- *From the Source* will lead you through a passage of the Bible that focuses on this characteristic.
- *From the Heart* provides you with a memory verse to "hide God's Word" in your hearts (Psalm 119:11).
- *Action Steps* list the steps you will take to improve in this area of leadership.

The Adult Leader's Guide follows the same general flow of the Student Guide, with the following additional materials

- *Leader's Intro* prepares you for what's ahead.
- *Activities and Video Clips*\* reinforce the lesson, give you extra options to use during your group discussion times, and serve as great intros.
- *Additional Resources* highlight optional reading to help you prepare to teach the lesson. You may also wish to give the reading to students for further in-depth study on a topic.

*\*While we made every effort to avoid clips with profanity or other potentially offensive material, it is crucial for you to preview the movie clip first to be sure that it is appropriate for your team. Previewing will also help you know how to tie the clip into the session.*



Danger Ahead: Four

## Leaders Face Opposition

### Leader Intro

An essential life skill of a leader is to face opposition with integrity and to prepare for obstacles that will arise. Keeping a clear focus on a goal allows leaders to stand strong and navigate through obstacles. This lesson will help you teach your students how to handle the opposition that they are bound to face as a leader.

In this session students will:

- Learn how to identify the choices they have when faced with opposition.
- Recognize obstacles that different leaders must navigate.
- Create an action plan for dealing with opposition.

### Activity: Minefield

Mark off a large, four-sided area with tape or cones. Scatter mines (upside down Dixie cups) throughout the area. Divide the group into teams. Place teams on opposing sides of the minefield. Tell each team to pair up. (For example, two teams of six would become two teams of three pairs each.) One person in each pair will be designated the miner and the other the guide. Have the miners put on blindfolds and stand on the edge of the mine field facing the opposing team. The guide's job is to get their miner to the other side of the minefield without detonating (stepping on or kicking) any mines or running into miners from the opposing team. The guides may NOT enter the mine field and can only give verbal directions from their sideline. If a miner steps on a mine, they're out. If two players from opposing teams run into or touch each other, they're both out. Miners that are out remain where they are and become obstacles. They may remove their blindfolds and may choose to verbally help their teammates. (They may not trip other miners!) The catch is that their voices will give them away to the other team, who can then more easily dodge them. The game ends when all miners are out or when one miner reaches the other side of the mine field successfully. If there is enough time, tell partners to trade roles.

It can become very loud as all the guides are shouting directions at the same time. The key is for the miners to focus on one voice and follow it. For an extra twist, the youth leader can shout wrong information to the miners.

### Discussion:

Opposition can come in many forms. You can face it head-on, try to avoid it, or give in to it.

- Guides, what opposition did you face in this exercise? How did you adjust to deal with it?
- Miners, what opposition did you face in this exercise? What did you do to defeat it?
- What made the winning team successful?
- Who were the leaders? Why?
- What would have made the game easier? Why? How does that compare to real life leadership?

### Video Clip: Freedom Writers

This movie is set in 1994 at Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, California, two years after the LA riots. This movie is based on true stories.

Elapsed Time: 6 minutes

Rated: PG-13

Opening Scene: The clip begins (00:34:30) with teacher Erin Gruwell (Hilary Swank) having a discussion with her class about gangs and racism. She asks, "You think you'll make it to graduation like this?" The bell rings and the following scenes show Mrs. Gruwell facing opposition from other teachers who don't think her students could/should learn about the Holocaust.

Closing Scene: The clip ends (00:40:30) with a teacher in the lunchroom saying, "You're not qualified to make judgments about teachers who have to survive this place!"

### Questions:

- What was Mrs. Gruwell trying to accomplish?
- What opposition did she face? What reasons did they give for opposing her?
- How do you think she responded to the opposition?
- Later in the movie, we learn that Mrs. Gruwell got an extra job to pay for new copies of *The Diary of Anne Frank* to give to her students. Knowing that, how did she exemplify leadership?

### Additional Resources:

*Leadership*--book by Rudy Giuliani detailing the lessons he learned during and after 9/11

*The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them*--the book by Erin Gruwell's students that inspired the movie.

## Free Fall!

### Danger Ahead!

You've taken the jump. You can feel the wind against your face. The earth is rushing toward you at a terrific speed. You have reached terminal velocity, 120 miles per hour. Now is not the time for complacency, though. You are in a dangerous situation that requires your full awareness to handle it well. You are in free fall.

Nehemiah was fully aware of his situation. His success was not guaranteed. In fact, it seemed that the odds were stacked against him. Nehemiah did not let his situation dictate his actions. He knew that obstacles were inherent to leadership. He faced his obstacles head on and did not swerve from his mission.

- Neh. 4 - Leaders face Opposition (Rudy Guiliani)
- Neh. 5 - Leaders face Internal Turmoil (Abraham Lincoln)
- Neh. 6:1-14 - Leaders face Intimidation (Harriet Tubman)

## Danger Ahead: Four Leaders Face Opposition



In the wake of 9/11, one leader stood out as the heart and hope for New Yorkers and all Americans. In the midst of major opposition, the mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani, responded quickly to the attacks on our soil. With optimism, hope, integrity, and a strong vision, Giuliani encouraged a nation that was confused, angry, and certainly mourning.

In a speech given days after the 9/11 tragedy, Giuliani stated, "On September 11, New York City suffered the darkest day in our long history. The destruction of the World Trade Center, and the resulting loss of thousands of lives, has broken our City's heart. But our heart still beats and our City remains strong. We will emerge from this stronger than we have ever been before." Giuliani faced great obstacles in these moments, trying to keep the city safe, to encourage those who were mourning, and to deliver hope to a city and nation.

With focus and determination against the opposition, Rudy went on to say, "The people of the City of New York will demonstrate that we are stronger than these barbarians. We are not going to participate in group blame or group hatred, because those are the sicknesses that caused this tragedy. Our City is going to continue to honor its immigrant heritage. Through the strength of our example, we are going to send the message that life in our City goes on, undeterred. We will continue to embody the highest ideals of America."

In the first few hours after the attack at the World Trade Center, it would seem that the opposition had won and had taken away any hope Giuliani had built. Through the midst of turmoil, Giuliani remained focused on his goal. Instead of giving up and giving in to the forces against him, he stood strong and delivered a new hope for the city and nation.

### Life skills of a leader:

An essential life skill of a leader is to face opposition with integrity and to prepare for obstacles that will arise. Keeping a clear focus on a goal allows leaders to stand strong and navigate through obstacles.

### Discovery Questions:

1. How have you faced opposition as a leader?  
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 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What helped you get through obstacles so that you could continue your task?  
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### 100 Jump Wonders:

Skydivers that have completed 100-500 dives. This is the most dangerous period for a diver as the initial fear has worn off but the diver has not yet acquired the skills to handle all dangerous situations.



3. What would you have done as a leader if you were in Rudy Giuliani's position? What statement stands out to you in the quotes on page 29?  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. When faced with obstacles, leaders sometimes fail and fall short because of fear. What are some of the costs of dealing with opposition head on?  
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5. Have you experienced the benefits of dealing with opposition and continuing your task? What are the benefits?  
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**From the Source:**

As leaders, we have goals that we are trying to achieve. On the road to reaching our goals, obstacles arise all around us. Obstacles and opposition challenge what we try to accomplish. When faced with obstacles we have two choices. We can compromise our beliefs and give in to difficulty, or we can stand strong and work through opposition in order to finish our task.

In chapter four, we don't yet see the reward of Nehemiah's faith in finishing the task and overcoming opposition. Nehemiah was opposed by some men who wanted him to fail. Many men despised Nehemiah and his workers so much that Nehemiah had to station guards and continue working with a sword in his hand. Obstacles come at all stages of finishing a task, and this one was big. Nehemiah had a goal to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and make them strong. He had people who believed in him and helped him reach his goal. Unfortunately, there were also people who believed what he was doing was wrong.

Surrendering to opposition would require giving up your dreams. When you stand firm, God will reward you. At the end of chapter four, Nehemiah continues working with a sword in his hand. He is persistent, refusing to let anyone or anything destroy his goal.



**Sky Surfing:**

A form of skydiving in which a diver wears a board attached to their feet and performs surfing-style acrobatics during freefall.

Read Nehemiah 4 and answer the following questions:

- 1. Why do you think Nehemiah's opposition wanted him to fail?

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\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. What action did Nehemiah take in order to keep his goal in sight?

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\_\_\_\_\_

- 3. Have you ever prayed for an obstacle to be removed from your path? Describe the outcome of your prayer.

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\_\_\_\_\_

- 4. In leadership, facing obstacles is a part of the process. How will you face an obstacle head on?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 5. How has the story of Nehemiah encouraged you in your leadership role?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**From the Heart:**

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." -Deuteronomy 31:6*

**Action Steps:**

- 1. Put together an action plan for dealing with opposition. How will you face opposition with integrity? How will you keep clear goals so that you will not buckle under pressure?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Pray for people you know in leadership roles. Ask God to put people around them who will encourage and support their goals. How can you encourage them to continue to face and conquer opposition?

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**Freefall:**

Acceleration due only to the force of gravity.