

LEADER'S GUIDE



**LIFE STEPS**  
with Michael Pritchard

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**Program #9**

**Respect**

## **Series Overview**

*LifeSteps* is a 12-part series designed to help students build character and develop the social and emotional skills they need to become responsible, caring, and successful adults. With well-developed social and emotional skills, young people will be more aware of their feelings and more capable of managing them. They will be better able to set goals, make decisions, solve problems, and relate to other people effectively. In school, these skills can increase motivation, lessen anxiety, improve study skills and boost academic achievement.

*LifeSteps* uses lively, unrehearsed student-centered discussion, dramatized dilemmas that accurately reflect teen experience, and themed comic interludes that deliver their message through humor. Filmed with actual students in schools across the country, each program is culturally sensitive and multiethnic. The series covers a broad range of skills and attributes: self-knowledge, self-control, resiliency, empathy, problem solving, developing interpersonal relationships, building character, respect, responsibility, and working towards success. Each of these skills and attributes is an important component of social and emotional intelligence.

The underlying structure of the *LifeSteps* curriculum is an eight-step problem-solving strategy. Explored in depth in Program #6, *Creative Problem Solving*, this strategy is demonstrated in each program and provides students with a flexible, practical approach to managing the social and emotional challenges they face every day. The eight steps are:

- 1. Stop and calm down**
- 2. Name the problem**
- 3. Understand others**
- 4. Brainstorm solutions**
- 5. Evaluate and choose**
- 6. Make a plan**
- 7. Reflect and adjust**
- 8. Reward yourself**

Although each program has unique objectives, they all share the goal of providing students with the above important life skills. The *LifeSteps* approach can help teens think through difficult situations and make good choices, during a stage in their development when they are driven by strong emotions.

## **How to Use This Program**

This program is designed for use in classrooms, community centers, youth organizations, camps, teen groups, libraries, or for children at home. Although teens are the target audience, parents, teachers, school administrators, school support staff, counselors, social workers, youth workers, peer counseling trainers, mentors, and anyone else who has regular contact with, and a commitment to, young people can benefit from the program. This Leader's Guide is aimed at teachers, but it can be used by any group leader who wants to get the most out of *Respect*.

As with the other programs in the *LifeSteps* series, *Respect* is intended for use as part of a learning experience that begins before viewing the program and ends beyond the classroom walls. The discussion questions and activities are intended to focus and enhance this learning experience.

Before showing *Respect* to your students, you may find these steps helpful:

- Screen the program at least once, noting areas where you may want to stop the tape to focus on a particular issue.
- Read this guide through to get a sense of how you can use the program, what discussion questions would work best, and what follow-up activities would be most productive.
- Ask the students questions to get them thinking about some of the key issues presented in this program. You might want to distribute copies of the discussion questions on pages 6 and 7. Be sure to review the questions in advance to make sure they are clear to you and appropriate for your students. You can then use them to encourage discussion after the screening.

Peer education, rather than frontal teaching, is the technique that underlies the entire *LifeSteps* series. Because we believe that teen viewers will more easily learn the skills and attitudinal changes proposed if they are taught by their peers, the programs are structured around discussions where real teens grapple with tough situations and model positive solutions.

### **Objectives**

- To explore respect as a fundamental social value
- To understand how disrespect causes conflict
- To recognize respect as a step towards eliminating prejudice and realize the impact of stereotyping on individuals
- To strengthen self-respect
- To understand the relationship between empathy and respect

### **Synopsis**

We all want respect, but it is easier to want it than to give it, Michael tells an audience. Labeling, stereotyping, and rudeness cut us off from understanding others and can stop us from getting the respect we all want and deserve.

Michael asks a group of teens what they think respect is about. "Treating people as human beings," answers one girl. Michael asks if respect helps to smooth out conflicts. A boy shares that he doesn't like a lot of people at his job, "but you've got to learn to overlook that." "Why?" asks Michael. The boy answers that if they don't respect each other, they won't get anything done.

Another boy says that he automatically shows people respect when he walks into a room because everyone "has their piece of the pie...their part in life...and you have to respect their opinion, idea, choice, whatever that might be." "Even if you don't like

it?" Michael asks. "Even if you don't like it." Michael sums up, saying that "respect is kind of the glue that holds the whole thing together." The teens agree.

Michael asks if there are people at school who are sometimes disrespectful, and the group says there are. Disrespectful behaviors include laughing at other people, arguing with teachers, and calling people names. One girl shares a story about being bumped by someone who did not say excuse me, while she was getting a drink at the water fountain. The water splashed over her face, and she ran after the person to tell them she didn't appreciate what they did. Her story prompts Michael to ask the group if there are kids at school with a lot of attitude. The teens emphatically answer "Yes!"

"Describe somebody who goes around here with a lot of attitude," Michael says to the group. One boy talks about someone giving him "hard looks" and "just trying to start something to get attention." Another boy talks about busy school hallway intersections where there are always kids lounging around. If you bump into them accidentally, they get mad at you.

"How about disrespect between boys and girls here at school?" Michael asks. One girl shares that guys will stand in the hall and when a girl walks by, they'll make disrespectful comments. When the girls are treated that way, it makes them feel "like a piece of meat."

Do you get typed by who you hang out with? Michael asks. The kids say that this happens all the time. One girl says that because she's a cheerleader, kids think she is ditzzy and stupid. She feels those labels don't apply to her and they should get to know her first. A boy says that he is stereotyped as a "skater," and the skater profile includes doing drugs, tagging, getting into trouble and being disrespectful. Another girl shares a story about a time she was with a group of adults who asked her if she was planning to go to college. When she answered that, of course, she was, they were surprised. She was hurt by their reaction, which she attributed to the fact that she was young and black. A girl shares a stereotype that evolved from the behavior of a few 10th grade girls in her community who made some mistakes. Michael asks her what she would like to say to those people. She answers that they should know that the 10th grade girls are very intelligent and have things to give to the world...they should be given the opportunity to do that and to be judged as they are, rather than on the mistakes of a few individuals.

When Michael asks if there are some groups at school that don't get respect, the answers include "kids who look like they're going to drop out or be kicked out of school, and the skaters who are known for smoking and doing drugs." One girl says that since the (skater) group is stereotyped, kids who hang out "over there," are stereotyped that way too. "Should it be that way?" Michael asks her. "No," she answers sadly. A boy who is a "skater" shares that although some kids in his group have made their lives bad by doing drugs and getting into trouble, others in the group have never thought about doing drugs. Some people outside the group assume that they are all the same way. The boy says that he "gives everyone a fair chance the first time he meets them" and the opportunity to be his friend until they do something he doesn't like. Michael observes that respect is an important thing in the boy's life, and the boy agrees.

Michael introduces a dramatized segment about Luis, who is dealing with the issue of respect. Luis says that some of the kids at his school act tough; Luis calls them “wannabes.” After class, Luis and his friend Jimmy are talking and not looking where they are walking. As a result, Luis bumps into KC—one of the “wannabes”—who tells Luis, “You don’t want to be messing with me.” Luis apologizes, but hears KC and his friends laughing and talking about the confrontation as he and Jimmy walk away.

When Michael asks the group what Luis was feeling, they say, “hurt,” “disrespected,” and “less than...” In answer to Michael’s question if they’ve ever had anyone laugh at them, a girl answers that people used to laugh at her voice. She learned to get over it by accepting herself and her voice. Now she feels that if people don’t accept her, it’s their problem. She learned this lesson when she got sick of being upset about it.

A boy shares a story about a “skater” friend who was involved in a hallway altercation that led to a near brawl with a large group in their school. The group tried to provoke the skaters into a fight by calling them names. The friend remained cool and told the other skaters to ignore the group’s insults. When the large group saw that they were not able to incite a fight, they gave up and left.

Another boy says that he has been both a wannabe and humiliated when he tried to get respect from others by acting tough. When friends told him he was trying to be something he wasn’t, he eventually learned to be himself, which finally opened the door to earning others’ respect.

The group watches the second dramatized segment in which Luis is treated badly at the corner store, when the owner insults him and accuses him of stealing. After the segment, a boy tells Michael that the store owner’s insults were racist. Another boy says that as someone who is half Mexican, he knows how that feels.

In response to Michael’s question to the group, “Have any of you ever been followed in a store?” several tell stories of store owners who falsely accused them of stealing or followed them around because they are teenagers. A boy says that sales people watch him wherever he goes because he’s a teenager, he’s black, and he’s big. “I’m not like that,” he says. “That isn’t me.” “How do you maintain your self-respect?” Michael asks. The boy responds that he knows who he is—a black male in the South—and knows where he’s going in life. He adds that “Racism happens because we’re not all on the same wave length, but it’s our duty to inform people. We need to teach others about ourselves and learn about others.”

In the third dramatized segment, Luis and Jimmy are having trouble with a new teacher, Ms. Jaquith, who is a tough grader. Unhappy about their marks, the kids begin making fun of her. Although Luis goes along with the group, he overhears his teacher telling someone how the kids are acting; he can tell that it’s bothering her. He starts feeling bad about the way the kids have been acting, but when he tries to talk to Jimmy, Jimmy says, “She doesn’t respect us; why should we respect her?”

Michael asks the group how Luis is feeling now. A boy says he is caught between a teacher and a friend. Although the teens says that kids get mad about grades in their school too, one girl says that there are ways to voice your opinion without being disrespectful. You need to talk about it in a mature way. A boy adds that he's learned that if you treat a teacher with respect, you get it back. The teacher will be more likely to listen to you.

"What were Luis's feelings about the teacher when he overheard her talking about her class?" Michael asks. A girl says that he now saw the teacher as a human being with feelings. A boy tells a story about a teacher he had who was old; everyone made fun of her, including him. He changed when he realized that we all get old and that he could be that person someday.

Michael asks if anyone ever had a teacher they had a hard time with at the beginning but who turned out to be a good teacher. One girl gives an example of her biology teacher. At first, she hated her; eventually she loved her. They had some problems, but they talked about them and worked things out.

A boy tells about a teacher with whom he had conflicts. They talked man to man and gave each other respect. Now he calls that teacher Pops—respect paved the way.

Michael concludes by saying that we need to respect others—even when it's hard to do because we disagree with them or we don't like them.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. In the program, Michael describes respect as "the glue that holds us all together." What do you think that means?
2. Why is it important for people to respect each other? What happens to relationships if people don't respect each other?
3. When Michael asks the group if there are a lot of kids with attitude in their school, the group agrees that there are. Is attitude a problem in your school? How do kids with attitude affect you?
4. How can you show people that you respect them? What behavior shows disrespect?
5. What is a stereotype? Have you ever been stereotyped? Describe what happened and how it made you feel.
6. In this program, Luis feels bad when he realizes that his teacher is bothered by how kids behave toward her. What might he do to improve the situation?
7. Some people inspire respect by the way they behave. What qualities do you respect in people? What do you think people respect about you?

8. Many teens in the program share experiences of having been distrusted by store personnel. Has this ever happened to you or someone you know? How did you react and how did it make you feel?

9. Think about some times you have been bullied or seen others being bullied. What caused the bullying? What techniques seemed to work to stop it? What did not work?

10. If you don't have empathy for someone, it is impossible to respect that person. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your reasons.

### **Activities**

1. Imagine you are a camp counselor for a group of 10-year-olds who are constantly putting each other down. Plan a series of three activities that will encourage them to respect each other. Contact a counselor or psychologist in a local elementary school or a youth worker in a local youth organization, and ask how they would handle similar situations. Compare your ideas with theirs.

2. Create a code of respect for your school. Include guidelines that promote respectful behavior for both teachers and students to follow toward each other. Present the code to your school government, and explore the possibility of implementing it in your school.

3. Select two television programs, including one comedy and one show in another genre. Watch these shows for incidents that show disrespect for a particular group. Find the network's address on the Internet, and write a letter to them describing the incidents you observed and why they were disrespectful.

4. Think of a person that you wish you had shown more respect to. Write a letter to that person, explaining what behavior you think was disrespectful, why you behaved that way, and how you wish you had behaved. If you are comfortable doing so, send the letter.

5. Write a dialogue presenting a situation where two people—parent/child, teacher/student, classmate/classmate, etc.—disagree, but still respect each other. With a partner, present your dialogue to the class. After the presentation, discuss as a group why we need to respect others even when we disagree with them.



### **About Michael Pritchard**

Youth educator, humorist, actor, former probation officer, and PBS host, Michael Pritchard is known across the United States for his ability to help young people gain self-awareness. He has a unique ability to get teens to listen and open up, and uses his distinctive style of humor to share serious messages with his audience — messages about making good choices, personal responsibility, and respect for others.

Michael's award-winning series include: *SOS: Saving Our Schools*; *PeaceTalks*; *You Can Choose*; *The Power of Choice*; and *Big Changes, Big Choices*. A nationally acclaimed motivational speaker, Michael serves on the boards of directors for The Guardsmen, The Giants Community Fund, the Special Olympics, the California Association of Peer Programs, the Chinese-American Educational Institute, Ronald McDonald House, and the Salvation Army.





### **Program Titles**

- Program #1 The ABCs of Emotional Intelligence
- Program #2 Knowing Who You Are
- Program #3 Taking Charge
- Program #4 Bouncing Back
- Program #5 Empathy, Caring and Compassion
- Program #6 Creative Problem Solving
- Program #7 Getting Along with Others
- Program #8 Building Character
- Program #9 Respect
- Program #10 Responsibility
- Program #11 Developing Healthy Relationships
- Program #12 Doing Your Best

*Each program is approximately 30 minutes long.*

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