Topic: Being A Leader

Pictures: Hands overlapping one another, a pair of hands clapping, a gold medal

Leadership. What does the word mean? Leadership is not just the ability to lead a team, it is a journey of selflessness. Some people are born leaders while others are not. This was how I had to start my journey…

“Alright, class! We are going to work in groups to create a mindmap! It needs to contain the facts we discussed during the Science Centre trip!” Mrs Low’s voice boomed across the classroom like thunder. “This is a great opportunity for our newly appointed group leaders to prove themselves worthy of that title.”

Mrs Low then raised one of her eyebrows expectantly. The class burst into non-stop chattering. Rita and John glanced at me warily. I puffed my chest up, the gleaming badge with the words “Team Leader” pinned proudly on my uniform. I was a diamond, the only person in the limelight.

Mrs Low instructed the class, “Go to your seats now.”

In the blink of an eye, everyone rushed back to their tables to begin their project.

I took out a piece of paper and pointed to Rita, “Hey you! Make a list of the stuff that we have learned.”

Rita scowled and slammed her hand on the table.

She groaned, “Why do you have to be so bossy?”

“Because I’m the leader!” I shouted back.

She glared at me with indignation burning in her eyes.

I turned to John, “And you! Start drawing the mind map! I want it done quickly!”

John did not protest; he simply bit his lip, muttering, “Is this really leadership?”
He went on to draw the mind map while his question rang in my head and I asked myself - is this really leadership? It was as if I was standing in front of a mirror, looking at my reflection, wondering if I was proud to see how I was behaving then. Am I right to order people around like that? Should I be more polite and less bossy? Questions bombarded my brain until I felt it was about to explode. I closed my eyes and sighed.

Out of the blue, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I snapped out of my thoughts and whipped my head around. It was Mrs Low.

As though she could read my mind, Mrs Low explained, “Leadership is not just about being a leader. It is to serve others, not yourself. It is a selfless journey.”

Mrs Low gave me a pat on the back and left. Her words seared into my mind as I meditated on them. It was as if someone had lit a light bulb in my brain, banishing all my confusion. She was right. Leadership was about serving, not bossing people around.

I took a deep breath. Swallowing my pride, I turned to John and Rita. “I’m sorry guys. You know what? Let’s do this project in another way.”

John and Rita’s sulky expressions turned into the widest smiles. We began working on the project as a team. I kept reminding myself to be patient and not order them around while giving tips, ideas and feedback. Soon, we were done with the project. I went up to Mrs Low and passed it to her. She gave a satisfied nod and clapped proudly upon receiving our work.

“You’ve done well!” she commended.

I grinned and my heart fluttered. I was on cloud nine. Deep down, I knew that this was just the start, the start of my lifelong journey to become a true leader.

By Gervin Tan, P5