

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

GETTYSBURG

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Phone: (530) 465 1505
Studio: Warner Brothers Released: 1993
Genre: Drama/History Audience Rating: PG
Runtime: 261 minutes

Materials

VCR or DVD, television or projection system, Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles handouts (single-sided), notepad, writing utensil

Objective

Students will identify Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles illustrated within Gettysburg and discuss leadership lessons learned with group members or mentors.

Basic Plot

In July of 1863 Federal soldiers have followed the Confederate Army into Pennsylvania to eventually meet for what will be an historic battle at the town of Gettysburg. Following the officers and soldiers of both armies, this story of the decisive three day battle is recounted highlighting the 20th Maine Regiment's defense of Little Round Top, and the Confederate Army's fateful charge up Cemetery Ridge.

Cast of Main Characters

Jeff Daniels	Col. Joshua Chamberlain
Tom Berenger	Lt. Gen. James Longstreet
Martin Sheen	Gen. Robert E. Lee
Stephen Lang	Maj. Gen. George E. Pickett
Richard Jordan	Brig. Gen. Lewis A. Armistead
Sam Elliot	Brig. Gen. John Buford
C. Thomas Howell.....	Lt. Thomas D. Chamberlain
Cooper Huckabee	Henry T. Harrison
Joseph Fuqua	Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart
Brian Mallon.....	Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock

Facilitation Options

Gettysburg illustrates an abundance of leadership values and principles. Students should have few problems identifying those that correspond to the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles. The objective is not to identify every leadership principle but to promote thought and discussion. Students should be less concerned with how many principles they view within the film and more concerned with how the principles they do recognize can be used to develop themselves as a leader.

Due to the historical nature of the film, the facilitator/mentor has an option of incorporating a reading program along with the viewing of the film. Additional book and video references are provided below under “Other Reference.”

The film can be viewed in its entirety or by clip selection, depending on facilitator intent and time schedules. Another method is to have the employee(s) view the film on his/her own and then hold the discussion session.

Full-film Facilitation Suggestion

1. Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles with students.
2. Advise students to document instances within the film that illustrate/violate the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles on the handout provided.
3. Break students into small discussion groups.
4. Show students Gettysburg.
5. Be sure to give multiple breaks throughout the film.

6. Use time during the breaks to complete the guided discussion.
7. Provide a short synopsis with some “ticklers” to pay attention before beginning each segment of the film.
8. Resume the film.
9. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their role in wildland fire suppression. Facilitate discussion in groups that have difficulty.
10. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Clip Facilitation Suggestion:

1. Review the Wildland Fire Leadership Value or Principle targeted for discussion. (May be given or ask students to identify the value or principle being illustrated after viewing the clip.)
2. Show the clip.

Gettysburg clip suggestions:

- Side A: “Prisoner Delivery” (16min:18sec – 30min:18sec).
 - Side A: “Assessing the Enemy” (43min: 30sec – 45min).
 - Side A: “Little Round Top” (1hr 50min – 1hr 55min).
 - Side A: “Bayonets” (2hr 13min – 2hr 18min).
 - Side B: “Good Order in Retreat” (1hr 35min – 1hr 38min).
 - Side B: “Lee Admonishes Stuart” (16min: 30sec – 21min).
 - Side B: “Longstreet’s Worry” (27min – 31min).
3. Facilitate discussion regarding the selected clip and corresponding value and/or principle.
 4. Break students into small discussion groups.
 5. Have students discuss their findings and how they will apply leadership lessons learned to their role in wildland fire suppression. Facilitate discussion in groups that may have difficulty.
 6. Wrap up the session and encourage students to apply leadership lessons learned in their personal and work lives.

Mentor Suggestion

Use either method presented above. The mentor should be available to the student to discuss lessons learned from the film as well as incorporating them to the student’s leadership self-development plan.

Encouraging individuals to keep a leadership journal is an excellent way to document leadership values and principles that are practiced.

Suggest other wildland fire leadership toolbox items that will contribute to the overall leadership development of the student.

References

- Shaara, Michael. *Killer Angels*. New York: Mckay, 1974.
- Chamberlain, Gen. Joshua L. *Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg*. Gettysburg, PA: Stan Clark Military Books, February 1994.
- Penny, Morris M & J. Gary Laine. *Struggle for the Round Tops: Law's Alabama Brigade at the Battle of Gettysburg, July 2-3, 1863*. Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, September 1999.
- [Battle of Gettysburg](#). 2008. Wikipedia.org.
- [Battle of Gettysburg](#). 2006. LSU Civil War Center. July 21, 2008.
- Chamberlain, Joshua Lawrence. [After Action Report](#). Augusta, ME: Maine Military Historical Society, Inc. 1989.
- Hyperlinks have been included to facilitate the use of the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website. Encourage students of leadership to visit the [website \(https://www.fireleadership.gov/\)](https://www.fireleadership.gov/).

Gettysburg

The following clips illustrate the Wildland Leadership Values and Principles. These are only guidelines and may be interpreted differently by other views; they are presented as a guide for facilitation.

Duty

- On the first day of battle, General Buford of the Union Cavalry finds himself in a tough fight with a limited number of men. He quickly formulates a plan to hold off a Confederate attack until his reinforcements can arrive. (Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives.)
- While speaking with General Longstreet, General Lee hears artillery explosions in the distance. He immediately dispatches a Major to find out the circumstances of the fighting. He also orders his horse to be brought to him so that he may inspect the situation for himself. (Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions.)
- General Pickett of the Confederate Army was given the duties of an intelligence officer due to his ability to know the position of the enemy with exceptional consistency. (Consider individual skill levels and development needs when assigning tasks.)

- Before the final day of battle on Friday, July 3rd 1863, General Longstreet meets with Colonel Alexander who is in charge of the Confederate Artillery. He explains in no uncertain terms what is expected of his artillery during the upcoming fight. (Issue clear instructions.)

Respect

- After debriefing his spy, Confederate General Longstreet orders one of his captains to get him a cigar and a tent. In addition to this, during this scene we also learn that the Confederate Army has paid this man in gold for information he provided earlier in the war. (Take care of your subordinates needs.)
- Colonel Chamberlain informs the 2nd Maine Regiment of the current situation with regard to the upcoming battle. (Keep your subordinates informed.)
- After the defense of Little Round Top, an officer who had watched the engagement from a distant position gave Colonel Chamberlain and the 20th Maine Regiment his highest regards. Chamberlain later received the Congressional Medal of Honor. (Recognize individual and team accomplishments and reward them appropriately)
- Union Colonel Vincent gave Colonel Chamberlain clear and emphatic instructions as to what he was to do at Little Round Top. He was ordered to defend the far left flank at all costs. (Provide early warnings to subordinates of tasks for which they will be responsible.)

Integrity

- Before the Confederacy's attack on Cemetery Ridge, General Longstreet voices his misgivings about their chances of victory to General Lee. He even asks that he be replaced as leader of the charge. When his argument is quashed by the unrelenting General Lee, he states, "My apologies sir. I have always been very cautious. Very cautious." (Know the strengths/weaknesses in you character and skill level.)
- General Lee unequivocally accepts responsibility for the Confederacy's loss at Gettysburg. (Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.)
- Colonel Chamberlain refuses to ride his horse on long marches. He opts to walk alongside his men as they march to battle. (Share the hazards and hardships with your subordinates.)

Gettysburg

Guided Discussion – Possible Answers

1. In the opening scene of Gettysburg, the narrator describes the march of the Confederate Army into Northern territory. According to the narrator, does the Southern leadership place any additional pressure upon General Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate forces, to be successful in his northward march? What is the source of this pressure? Give examples of situations in wildland fire where pressure from leadership can be a factor in the decision making of firefighters.
 - **As described in the opening narrative, the Southern Government has placed an extraordinary amount of pressure on their push into Union Territory. This pressure is increased by the fact that a letter has been drafted by Confederate President Jefferson Davis that is to be placed on the desk of President Lincoln urging the complete surrender of the Union army. The letter is to be delivered after a convincing victory by General Lee's forces. (Prologue)**
 - **Examples of situations in wildland fire where pressure from leadership can be a factor will vary. Encourage students to draw on their own experiences.**
2. Describe General Lee's reaction when he learns that General Meade has been transferred command of the Union Army. Which element of the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles does General Lee exemplify in this instance?
 - **When General Lee learns that General Meade has been transferred command of the Union Army he remarks that he sees favorable opportunities for the Confederacy. Based on his knowledge of the man and his personal tendencies, Lee predicts that it will take Meade some time to get organized for the effective use of his army. It signals to Lee the perfect time for an attack. (Chapter 2)**
 - **General Lee "maintain[s] situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions." And "improvise[s] within the commander's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment."**
3. Colonel Joshua Chamberlain of the Union's 20th Maine Regiment is assigned a regiment of 120 mutineers from his home state. When dealing with these men, Colonel Chamberlain shows them an extraordinary amount of respect. Why does he do this? Does this approach achieve its desired effect? In your opinion, do these men deserve the treatment they receive?
 - **Answers will vary as to why Chamberlain treats them with such respect. Some students may conclude that he was simply feigning respect in order to get them to fight. Others may believe that he truly empathized with the outrage and wariness of these battle-tested soldiers. Some will hopefully assert that it was a mixture of both. This is a fairly subjective question**

designed to get the students to think as to whether or not they would have handled this situation in the same manner as did Colonel Chamberlain. (Chapter 4)

4. Colonel Chamberlain insists that his brother, who is a Lieutenant and therefore a subordinate, refer to him as “Colonel.” Why does he do this?
 - **Colonel Chamberlain insists that his brother act professionally in his presence out of respect for his men (Part of the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles). Touched upon several times in this film is the idea that America is unique and worth preserving because, based on the Constitution, every man is created equal and is judged and treated in a manner befitting his actions, not simply by birthright. Colonel Chamberlain believes so strongly in these ideals that he refuses to let his brother compromise them even in the context of casual conversation. (Chapter 4)**
5. There is a scene in the movie when General Buford of the Union Cavalry surveys the land on which the North and the South will do battle. In this scene, General Buford displays impressive situational awareness when describing how he believes the Battle of Gettysburg will play out. His prediction of the outcome is grim at best. How does his demeanor change when he informs his men of the battle plan? What is the purpose of this change?
 - When presenting the battle plan to his officers, General Buford’s attitude of helplessness and anger is transformed to one of determination and strength. This change in demeanor may be a conscious effort to maintain the morale of his men. He understands that in order to have any chance of success, the officers and men under his command must believe that the battle is not hopeless. Even when it comes to attitude, a leader must set the example, as Buford demonstrates in this scene. (Chapter 6)
6. During the buildup to the Battle of Gettysburg, General Lee asks General Longstreet to maintain a safe position in the back of the field. What is General Longstreet’s response to this order? Referencing the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, which element of integrity does this display in General Longstreet’s character?
 - General Longstreet states, “You can’t lead from behind.” According to the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, he displays a willingness to experience the same hardships as his men. (Chapter 7)
7. On July 1, 1863, the Confederate Infantry attacks General Buford and the Union Cavalry’s position at Gettysburg. This offensive is in direct opposition to General Lee’s orders to “avoid contact with the enemy” until the Confederate forces have a chance to concentrate near the battlefield. According the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, who is responsible for this critical error? Why?
 - According to the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, it can be argued that General Lee is responsible for this premature attack on the Union army. After the attack, General Lee harshly reprimands the Confederate General responsible

(General Heath). While rebuking the general for his actions, General Lee explains to him that he has put the army at a disadvantage because they need more time to get their troops in order. Had General Lee accompanied his original order of “do not attack” with this reasoning and intent, the Confederate General may have been able to make the correct decision under stressful and confusing circumstances. (Chapter 7, Chapter 10)

8. When the Confederates appear to have an upper hand in the battle, Confederate General Longstreet suggests to General Lee that pulling back and continuing their march South towards Washington D.C. is the best option. In his argument for this action, he references the Confederate Army’s predetermined strategy of a “defensive” style push into Union territory. When General Lee dismisses General Longstreet’s suggestion, what is his reasoning?
 - General Lee does not wish to pull his troops back because he believes that their situation has changed and that they now have the Federal Army “on the run.” He also states that by pulling back, they will give the enemy the chance to rearm themselves and come back even stronger. In addition, he takes the morale of his troops into account, believing that the men will become disheartened by the retreat. General Lee changes his strategy based on an assessment of the current circumstances of the war. (Chapter 13, Chapter 20)
9. Describe the spirit in which the Union Colonel Vincent assigns Colonel Chamberlain the crucial task of holding the far left of the Union line at Little Round Top. How does Chamberlain relate this urgency to his men? Should wildland firefighters ever be placed in a situation similar to this, where they must stand their ground at all costs?
 - The Union General places a lot of pressure on Colonel Chamberlain by explaining to him that he must hold his ground because if he does not, the Confederates will be in a position to attack the rest of the Union Army from the rear. This outcome would no doubt cost the Union forces the battle. Colonel Chamberlain relates this urgency to his men by bringing them all together and giving them a thorough briefing of their situation. He also tells the men, contrary to the beliefs of the superior officers, he believes the brunt of the attack will come up the left flank of Little Round Top. (Chapter 24)
 - No. Fighting in a war and fighting fire are not the same thing. Wildland firefighters should always have the ability to pull back and reassess the situation in order to engage the fire in a safe manner.
10. In terms of tactics, what were Colonel Chamberlain and the 20th Maine Regiment forced to do in order to be successful in the fighting on Little Round Top?
 - As wave after wave of Confederate troops stormed up the hill, Colonel Chamberlain and his regiment were forced to change tactics. Most notably, because of a shortage of ammunition, Chamberlain ordered his men to affix bayonets and charge down the hill. Wildland firefighters change tactics all the time in order to meet their objectives. (Chapter 27, Chapter 29)

11. In the film, there are two instances when General Lee must deal with personnel problems within his Army. In the first, an impassioned General Trimble comes to Lee with complaints about the abilities of his superior officer and with a request to be transferred. In the second instance, General Lee reprimands General Stuart of the Confederate Cavalry for his critical failures as the leader of this very important element of the Confederacy's war effort. Compare how Lee handles the reprimand of General Stuart, the Confederate Cavalry General, and the grievance of General Trimble.

- In the film, General Lee handles each of these two subordinates differently. When General Trimble enters his quarters and begins a tirade regarding the deficiency of his superior officers, Lee allows the emotional complaint to be heard in its entirety. After intently listening and saying almost nothing, he denies Trimble's request to be transferred. Lee does this in a way that shows Trimble he has a great deal of respect for his expertise and skill as a battlefield commander. He understands that he may be able to solve the problem simply by allowing an outlet for Trimble's frustration. Lee's ability to keep an even tone when dealing with the rage of his subordinate played a major role in diffusing a situation that may have become worse. (Chapter 18)
- General Lee's encounter with General Stuart is markedly different. Lee does not allow Stuart to explain himself and states that there is no time for excuses. He clearly defines his expectation that the cavalry will be the "eyes and ears" of the Confederate Army. Even though his reprimand of Stuart becomes heated at times, he leaves the General with the compliment that he is "one of the best cavalry officers I have every known." His respectful tone and demeanor at the end of the meeting, assures Stuart that he has not lost the trust of his superior officer. (Chapter 34)

12. Throughout the film, General Armistead is continuously preoccupied with the well-being of his dear friend General Hancock. Does he ever question his duty as an officer because of this personal conflict? Does this affect his performance as a general? Give an example from the film supporting your opinion.

- According to the film, the answer to the first two questions are "no." In one scene General Armistead recounts his fond memories of Hancock to General Longstreet. When the question arises as to whether or not he would refrain from fighting against his old friend if they met in a battle, he quickly states, "I can't do that. That wouldn't be right either." Also, in speaking with Colonel Freemantle of the British Army, Armistead shows his pride in Virginia and displays no misgivings about what his army is fighting for. Judging from the film, Armistead's performance as a general is not affected by his close personal relationship with Hancock. He is able to do what is required of him as a leader of the Confederate Army. He is able to put the needs and objectives of the army as a whole above his own personal conflicts. (Chapters 15, 33, 42)

13. Pickett's charge, although famous, was a catastrophe. Do you think Lee properly evaluated the risk of the charge, or is there something that he could have done better? How do wildland firefighters assess risk?

- Answers will vary to this question. It could be argued, though, that Lee did not properly assess the risk of the charge. The movie portrays Lee as a man stolidly determined to win the battle. Lee becomes so focused on this goal that he loses a bit of perspective and refuses to listen even to his trusted battlefield generals when they insist the battle cannot be won.
- Wildland firefighters assess risk using the Risk Management Process that can be found in the Incident Response Pocket Guide. (Situation Awareness, Hazard Assessment, Hazard Control, Decision Point, Evaluate).

14. After the Battle of Gettysburg, Lee accepts full responsibility for the defeat. How do his men react to this? By accepting responsibility for the loss, which element of the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles does General Lee exhibit?

- In this movie, Lee's men do not agree that he was responsible for their defeat. By accepting responsibility for the loss, General Lee exemplifies the element of Integrity by "Seek[ing] responsibility and accept[ing] responsibility for [his] actions."

DUTY

Be proficient in your job, both technically & as a leader.

- Take charge when in charge.
- Adhere to professional standard operating procedures.
- Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives.

Make sound & timely decisions.

- Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions.
- Develop contingencies & consider consequences.
- Improvise within the commander's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment.

Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, accomplished.

- Issue clear instructions.
- Observe & assess actions in progress without micro-managing.
- Use positive feedback to modify duties, tasks & assignments when appropriate.

Develop your subordinates for the future.

- Clearly state expectations.
- Delegate tasks that you are not required to do personally.
- Consider individual skill levels & developmental needs when assigning tasks.

Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.

- Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.
- Take care of your subordinate's needs.
- Resolve conflicts between individuals on the team.

Keep your subordinates informed.

- Provide accurate & timely briefings.
- Give the reason (intent) for assignments & tasks.
- Make yourself available to answer questions at appropriate times.

Build the team.

- Conduct frequent debriefings with the team to identify lessons learned.
- Recognize accomplishments & reward them appropriately.
- Apply disciplinary measures equally.

Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

- Observe human behavior as well as fire behavior.
- Provide early warning to subordinates of tasks they will be responsible for.
- Consider team experience, fatigue & physical limitations when accepting assignments.

Know yourself and seek improvement.

- Know the strengths/weaknesses in your character & skill level.
- Ask questions of peers & supervisors.
- Actively listen to feedback from subordinates.

Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.

- Accept full responsibility for & correct poor team performance.
- Credit subordinates for good performance.
- Keep your superiors informed of your actions.

Set the example.

- Share the hazards & hardships with your subordinates.
- Don't show discouragement when facing setbacks.
- Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.

RESPECT

INTEGRITY

Gettysburg

1. Document film clips illustrating/violating the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles.
2. Discuss leadership lessons learned from the film with group members or mentor.

Duty

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2. Make sound and timely decisions.
3. Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.
4. Develop your subordinates for the future.

Respect

1. Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.
2. Keep your subordinates informed.
3. Build the team.
4. Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.

Integrity

1. Know yourself and seek improvement.
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Guided Discussion

1. In the opening scene of Gettysburg, the narrator describes the march of the Confederate Army into Northern territory. According to the narrator, does the Southern leadership place any additional pressure upon General Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate forces, to be successful in his northward march? What is the source of this pressure? Give examples of situations in wildland fire where pressure from leadership can be a factor in the decision-making of firefighters.
2. Describe General Lee's reaction when he learns that General Meade has been transferred command of the Union Army. Which element of the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles does General Lee exemplify in this instance?
3. Colonel Joshua Chamberlain of the Union's 20th Maine Regiment is assigned a regiment of 120 mutineers from his home state. When dealing with these men, Colonel Chamberlain shows them an extraordinary amount of respect. Why does he do this? Does this approach achieve its desired effect? In your opinion, do these men deserve the treatment they receive?
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