

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

MASTER AND COMMANDER – THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

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Studio: Twentieth Century Fox – Home Video Released: 2004
Genre: Drama Audience Rating: PG-13
Runtime: 138 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 Master and Commander and discuss leadership lessons learned with group members or mentors.

Basic Plot

Based on a series of books by Patrick O'Brian, and directed by Peter Weir, Master and Commander plunges viewers deep into the story of a British Navy ship at sea during the Napoleonic war. Russell Crowe stars as Aubrey, the charismatic captain who wrestles with issues like honor, pride, duty, sacrifice and loyalty while using ingenious tactics to engage his prey--a much larger and better-equipped French Man o' War. Paul Bettany plays his friend, the ship's doctor, who cautions Aubrey about letting revenge cloud his judgment after the French Man o' War almost sinks them in an early battle. . .(Synopsis from rottentomatoes.com)

Cast of Main Characters

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Russell Crowe | Capt. Jack Aubrey |
| Paul Bettany | Dr. Stephen Maturin, Surgeon |
| James D’Arcy | 1st Lt. Tom Pullings |
| Max Pirkis | Blakeney, Midshipman |
| Max Benitz..... | Calamy, Midshipman |
| Lee Ingleby | Hollom, Midshipman |

Facilitation Options

Master and Commander illustrates an abundance of leadership values and principles—especially an emphasis on team cohesion and commander’s intent. 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.

Obtain copies of the Crew Cohesion Assessment Tool, developed by Mission-Centered Solutions, from the Toolbox on the [Wildland Fire Leadership Development website](#)) for use with Guided Discussion, #15.

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

When opting for the full-film method, the facilitator should determine a good breaking point near the middle of the film.

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 Master and Commander.
5. Break. (Suggestion: After Captain Jack breaks his promise to go ashore at Galapagos Island.)
6. Begin the guided discussion.

7. Provide a short synopsis with some “ticklers” to pay attention before beginning the rest 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.
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.

Hyperlinks have been included to facilitate the use of the [Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program website](#). Encourage students of leadership to visit the [website](#),

Master and Commander—The Far Side of the World

The following clips illustrate, or show violations of, 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

- As the officer of the watch, Hollom fails to make the decision to quarters; Calamy gives the order for him. Capt. Jack takes full charge after Calamy gives the orders to quarters when the Surprise comes under Acheron's first attack. (Take charge when in charge.)
- Capt. Jack develops a plan to use the crew to pull the Surprise into the fog. (Develop a plan to accomplish given objectives. Maintain situation awareness in order to anticipate needed actions.)
- Capt. Jack continues to teach the young shipmates even when the ship and crew retreats. Leaves Hollom in charge. (Develop your subordinates for the future.)
- While in battle, Captain Jack moves about the ship giving orders. (Observe and assess actions in progress without micro-managing.)
- Capt. Jack reengages the pursuit of the Acheron when Stephen sees it while searching the island. Converts the ship to a whaler. (Improvise within the commander's intent to handle a rapidly changing environment.)

Respect

- Capt. Jack and shipmate Nagle sacrifice Warley for the sake of the entire crew during a violent storm. (Put the safety of your subordinates above all other objectives.)
- Capt. Jack opts to chase the Acheron instead of getting food and water on Galapagos Island. (Take care of your subordinate's needs.)
- Stephen informs Jack of crew issues that have occurred under his command without notice. (Nagle was drunk when he insulted Hollom.) (Observe human behavior as well as fire behavior.)
- Capt. Jack pushes the crew to fire quickly with intense practice. (Recognize individual and team accomplishments and reward them appropriately.)
- Capt. Jack has Pullings brief Calamy and Blakeney of roles prior to attacking the Acheron. (Provide early warning to subordinates of tasks they will be responsible for.)

Integrity

- Capt. Jack walks the ship for damage assessment. Young shipmates bring in Acheron model. (Credit subordinates for good performance.)
- When the mast is broken in a violent storm, Capt. Jack and shipmate Nagle sacrifice Warley for the sake of the entire crew. (Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong.)

- Although Jack rarely takes Stephen's advice, he asks questions of him often. (Ask questions of peers and superiors. Accept full responsibility for and correct poor team performance.)
- Capt. Jack realizes that the mission has clouded his duty for crew safety and docks on Galapagos Island. (Know the strengths/weaknesses in your character and skill level.)
- Capt. Jack is informed that the French doctor died weeks ago; the captain of the Acheron impersonated the doctor. (Don't show discouragement when facing set backs.)

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Guided Discussion – Possible Answers

1. Captain Jack Aubrey's Admiralty Orders were to 'Intercept French Privateer Acheron en route to Pacific intent on carrying the war into those waters . . . Sink, burn or take her a prize.' Although successful, what could have sacrificed the mission?
 - **Answers will vary. His pride and focused intent on revenge. Not being accustomed to defeat. Loss of priorities—crew safety versus the mission.**
2. While Blakeney is recuperating from his injury, Captain Jack brings him a book regarding Lord Nelson's battle victories. Blakeney asks Captain Jack about Lord Nelson but gets this response, "You should read the book." What reading program is available to the wildland firefighter?
 - [Professional Reading Program](#)
3. What other tools does the wildland firefighter have available to him/her to promote lessons learned from historical wildland fires?
 - [Wildland Fire Staff Rides](#)
 - [Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center](#)
4. Stephen, talking about Lord Nelson, asserts, "Well, then, he would seem to be the exception to the rule that authority corrupts." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Have you experienced a time in your wildland fire career where this concept came to light? How did you deal with the situation?
 - **Answers will vary.**
5. During an exchange between Stephen and Jack, Stephen informs Jack that the crew is confident in following Lucky Jack's leadership. However, Stephen feels that Jack's leadership "is beginning to smack of pride." Jack's response is, "It's not a question of pride or anything like it. It is a question of duty." Following the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, who you agree with, Stephen or Jack? Defend your position.
 - **Answers will vary.**
6. Do you believe that orders should be followed—no matter the cost—in wildland fire suppression?

- **Answers will vary. Firefighter and public safety is the number one priority in wildland fire suppression. “Every individual has the right and obligation to report safety problems and contribute ideas regarding their safety. Supervisors are expected to give these concerns and ideas serious consideration. When an individual feels an assignment is unsafe they also have the obligation to identify, to the degree possible, safe alternatives for completing that assignment. Turning down an assignment is one possible outcome of managing risk.”** ([Incident Response Pocket Guide](#))
7. Jack breaks his promise to Stephen about docking at Galapagos Island. Jack retorts that his decisions are subject to the requirements of the service. Stephen alleges a corruption of power? Do you agree or disagree with this allegation? Defend your position.
- **Answers will vary.**
8. Captain Jack summons Hollom to his cabin in an attempt to resolve conflict between the crew and Hollom—the crew views Hollom as the “Jonah.” Captain Jacks says, “You don’t make friends with the foremost jacks, lad. They’ll despise you in the end, think you weak. Nor do you need to be a tyrant.” Is this philosophy true within the wildland fire community?
- **Answers will vary.**
9. Captain Jack gives Hollom the following leadership advice concerning strength, “Find it within yourself and you will earn their respect. Without respect, true discipline goes by the board.” How important are strength and respect to leadership? Give an example of a leader you have encountered who exhibited or violated this statement. (You may change the names.)
- **Answers will vary. Values are attitudes about the worth or importance of people or things. Every leader is influenced by multiple sets of values. However, Duty, Respect, and Integrity should be the guiding values for those in leadership roles. The Leadership Principles are the specific actions that leaders should take in order to demonstrate those values. Strength in our convictions to further leadership development is critical to wildland fire suppression—especially as the experienced workforce retires.**
 - **Answers will vary.**
10. Jack invites Stephen to his cabin as his friend not to comment on his command. He makes the following statement, “Stephen, I profoundly respect your right to disagree with me here in this cabin, but I can only afford one rebel on this ship. I hate it when you talk of the service in this way. It makes me so very low. . .” How would you handle a subordinate who talked badly about his/her agency?
- **Answers will vary. Follow the answer presented above. Ethics plays a large part in this discussion. The crew is only a small part of the entire organization. Encourage crew cohesion, duty, respect, and integrity on all levels.**

11. Jack also says to Stephen, “Men must be governed. Often not wisely, I will grant you, but they must be governed nonetheless.” Stephen replies, “That’s the excuse of every tyrant in history—from Nero to Bonaparte. And I for one am opposed to authority.” How does a leader handle a subordinate that doesn’t want to be led?

- **Answers will vary. The principles are actions leaders should take in order to demonstrate the values. Insubordinate employees must be dealt with in a professional manner—including disciplinary measures when warranted.**

12. Captain Jack employs the use of midshipman to run the Surprise. How effective is the use of these inexperienced young individuals? How does this compare to the structure of a crew in wildland fire suppression?

- **Answers will vary. This structure is similar to that employed on a wildland firefighting crew. Supervisors consider individual skill levels and development needs when assigning tasks. Both environments weigh heavily on using on-the-job training to develop leaders.**

13. Does Captain Jack develop contingencies and consider consequences with regard to his plan for capturing the Acheron? What contingencies should be available to every firefighter prior to engaging in the wildland fire battle?

- **Answers will vary. The crew is rarely informed of Aubrey’s plans.**
- **Escape routes and safety zones.**

14. Mr. Lamb advises Captain Jack, “I’ll not vouch for this mast, sir. Not around the Horn.” How did Captain Jack handle the situation? How would you have handled the situation?

- **Captain Jack responds with, “Thank you, Mr. Lamb. Your comments will be noted in the log.” He then pushes on until the mast breaks; the ship nearly sinks; and a crew member is lost at sea.**
- **Answers will vary.**

15. There are many levels of command on the Surprise. How cohesive is the crew? Use the [Crew Cohesion Assessment Tool](#) developed by Mission-Centered Solutions to assess Surprise’s crew as well as your own crew.

- **Answers will vary.**

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

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

Duty

1. Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.
2. Make sound and timely decisions.
3. Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.
4. Develop your subordinates for the future.
5. What scenes from the movie relate to “Duty”?

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.
5. What scenes from the movie relate to “Respect”?

Integrity

1. Know yourself and seek improvement.
2. Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.
3. Set the example.
4. Glory Road
5. What scenes from the movie relate to “Integrity”?

Guided Discussion

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