

Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

(Partnership with Drexel University's LeBow College of Business students

<http://www.lebow.drexel.edu/index.php>)

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

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Studio: DreamWorks Productions Released: 1998

Genre: Action/Drama/War Audience Rating: R

Runtime: 169 minutes

Materials

Saving Private Ryan DVD and access to appropriate articles and readings.

Objective:

Students will view the film, *Saving Private Ryan*, after becoming familiarized with the invasion of Normandy during World War II. Afterwards, they will discuss leadership qualities, traits, skills and theories explored within the film through discussion and other activities, and related to assigned readings.

Basic Plot

The movie opens up with a dramatic rendition of the invasion of Normandy during World War II, and focuses on its immediate aftermath. After finding out that three out of four fighting brothers were killed, and that their mother is to receive all three telegrams on the same day, the US Army Chief of Staff decides that the fourth brother, Private James Ryan (Matt Damon) needs to be brought home. He sends out a team of eight men, led by Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks), to find and save Private Ryan.

Cast of Main Characters

Tom Hanks	Captain John H. Miller
Tom Sizemore	Technical sergeant Mike Horvath
Edward Burns	Private First Class Richard Reiben
Barry Pepper	Private Daniel Jackson
Adam Goldberg.....	Private Stanley Mellish
Vin Diesel	Private First Class Adrian Caparzo
Giovanni Ribisi.....	Technician Fourth Grade Irwin Wade
Jeremy Davies	Technician Fifth Grade Timothy E. Upham
Matt Damon	Private First Class James Ryan
Ted Danson	Captain Fred Hamill
Paul Giamatti	Staff Sergeant William Hill
Dennis Farina	Lieutenant Colonel Walter Anderson
Harrison Young.....	James Ryan, present day
Kathleen Byron	Mrs. Ryan, present day
Harve Presnell	General George C. Marshall

Resource Materials

1. Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles (<https://www.fireleadership.gov>)
2. Kirkpatrick and Locke's Leadership Traits (http://sbuweb.tcu.edu/jmathis/Org_Mgmt_Materials/Leadership%20-%20Do%20Traits%20Matgter.pdf)
3. Butler University's Ten Principles of Servant Leadership (<https://www.butler.edu/volunteer/resources/ten-principles-servant-leadership>)
4. Greenleaf's Center for Servant Leadership (<https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/>)
5. McCrimmon's "Servant Leadership" (<http://www.leadersdirect.com/servant-leadership>)

Facilitation Options

Similar to many war films or stories, *Saving Private Ryan* provides exemplary instances of leadership. It consists of not simply acts of bravery - which can be found within any war-like setting - but also different leadership styles and qualities that relate to many different leadership theories. It should be simple for students to pinpoint different leadership theories such as the Kirkpatrick and Locke's Leadership Traits, Wildland Fire Leadership Values, and others. Because the film is very action-oriented, and puts many characters in both difficult and dangerous situations, it is a great piece that can be used to teach students about both

leadership and teamwork. Due to the length of the film (it runs for 169 minutes) there may not be enough time to watch the entire film in one sitting. In order to allow the overall assignment to be run as smoothly as possible, the related articles, which should be read before the movie is viewed, can be used to facilitate the lessons.

General Full-Film Facilitation Guidelines

1. Assign students appropriate readings prior to class meeting.
 - Letter to Mrs. Bixby – Letter (http://www.thelastfullmeasure.com/mrs_bixby.htm) from President Lincoln explaining to a mother that five of her sons died in battle. This inspired the US Army to bring back soldiers whose siblings have died. This is the basis of *Saving Private Ryan* where the Army is called to pull Private James from battle to return home as the only surviving son of his family.
 - D-Day - This passage (<http://www.army.mil/d-day/> or <http://www.history.com/topics/d-day>) overviews the events of D-Day, where the beginning of the film takes place. This gives students a general background on World War 2 at the time, and Normandy was being invaded.
2. Show the film *Saving Private Ryan*.
3. After the film, break students up in small groups and review articles given below, as well as have the facilitator or students research their own articles with other leadership topics that may interest the group. Additional support for leading discussions can be found as follows. The following articles look into Captain John Miller's leadership providing specific quotes and scenes. (<http://www.movieleadership.com/2012/09/23/great-movie-leaders-captain-john-miller/>)
4. Have groups discuss the use of Kirkpatrick and Locke's Leadership Traits, Wildland Fire Leadership Values, and other leadership theories researched that can be relate to the film.
5. Lead class discussion on the three main leadership theories included and whether students agree or disagree if they are the prevalent in the film. Encourage other theories to be brought up and discussed among the class. Have the class relate any leadership characteristics to previous films viewed in class.

Clips

- Clip A (<https://youtu.be/LvAIBDGIYE0>) – That's My Mission: Captain Miller successfully breaks up an argument between Reiben and Horvath by sharing his personal life and desire to get home to his wife.
- Clip B (<https://youtu.be/EoUb7jiFj5Q>) – Sticky Bomb: Captain Miller shows his knowledge and experience when explaining to the men that they can make "sticky bombs" and take out the German tanks.
- Clip C (<https://youtu.be/1r8zgU7wE8w>) – Ending "Earn it" and "Tell me I'm a good man": As Captain Miller lays dying, he gives Private Ryan one last piece of advice, "earn it," meaning earn the fact that he was saved at the hand of many men's lives. The film then fast forwards years later to Ryan at the cemetery where Miller was buried and Ryan questions whether he did earn his rescue and if he is a good man.

- Clip D (https://youtu.be/u3_3EUKbY00) – Captain Miller and his team find Private Ryan and attempt to force him to leave his team; however, Private Ryan chooses to stay and fight with his team and help the war effort. He refuses to desert the only brothers he has left—his fellow soldiers.
- Clip E (<https://youtu.be/Le9uGkbtXhk>) – Private Caparzo is fatally shot by a German sniper and his fellow soldiers cannot come out in the open to help him. Instead Private Jackson shoots the sniper and protects his comrades.
- Clip F (<https://youtu.be/DaVfHntwVc4>) – Miller talks to his men about chain of command and the fact that his complaining only goes up, not down. After questioning the mission for some time the men ask him what his complaints would be if they were superior officers. He replies with a sarcastic but respectful monologue.

Part One: Kirkpatrick and Locke Leadership Traits in *Saving Private Ryan*

Objective

Using Kirkpatrick and Locke’s Leadership Traits, students will critically analyze the three main characters of *Saving Private Ryan*: Captain John H. Miller, Sergeant Mike Horvath, and Private James Ryan, and their usage of the various traits, with the help of the video clips as well as a background of the film.

Character	Trait	Scene or Action/ Dialogue
Captain John H. Miller	Charisma	Miller breaks up a fight between Horvath and Reiben when Reiben attempts to leave the men. Miller, who is usually very private with his personal life, opens up and explains that he is a school teacher back home in Pennsylvania and he misses his wife dearly. He is able to make an extremely heated situation calm and refocus the men on the mission. (Clip A)
Captain John H. Miller	Honesty	Miller admits to the men that <i>saving Private Ryan</i> is not necessarily something that he wants to do. He says that he does not even know who this man is, and he is only a name to him, but if saving him means that he will be able to return home safely to his wife, he is willing to do it. (Clip A)
Captain John H. Miller	Initiative	Miller takes initiative in finding Private Ryan because he wants to go home to see his wife. He speaks to his men about this and admits that going on this journey is not ideally what he wants to do, but lights a fire in the men as he says that maybe by doing this the war can end that much sooner. (Clip A)

Character	Trait	Scene or Action/ Dialogue
Captain John H. Miller	Subject Knowledge	Miller knows that his men will be greatly outnumbered by the German troops, but comes up with a way that they can hurt them with the numbers that they do have. He shares with the men how to make “sticky bombs,” or explosives packed into socks and soaked in axle grease that stick when they are thrown. (Clip B)
Sergeant Mike Horvath	Tenacity	Horvath calls out Reiben for attempting to leave the men. He pulls a gun on Reiben and threatens to shoot him because he is so passionate about backing up his captain and the men. (Clip D)
Sergeant Mike Horvath	Motivation	Horvath persuades Miller to keep up the search for Ryan. This is even more impressive because Miller is his boss, so he is inspiring his superior contrary to how most leaders inspire those who are under them.
Sergeant Mike Horvath	Achievement	“ <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> was the only decent thing we were able to pull through this god- awful mess.” It turns out after Horvath says this, that saving Ryan was one of the few good things that came out of the men’s journey. They achieved what they wanted to achieve, but at the expense of many of the men’s lives.
Private James Ryan	Tenacity	When Private Ryan is told that he is allowed to go home, he refuses and wants to fight on. (Clip E)
Private James Ryan	Initiative	Private Ryan wants to stay with the only “brothers” he has left. The men he had spent the last few days with he had built a great bond with and felt obligated to stay with them because they would do the same for him.
Private James Ryan	Achievement	“I think about what you said to me on the bridge every day, I tried to live my life the best I could, I hope in your eyes I’ve earned what all of you have done for me.” Although Ryan struggles with whether he is a good man and if he has done enough to make the men who sacrificed their lives for him proud, he did live a good life and was a good husband, father, and grandfather. (Clip C)

Part Two: Wildland Fire Leadership Values in *Saving Private Ryan*

Objective

After watching the film *Saving Private Ryan*, and being familiarized with the Wildland Fire Leadership Values, students can analyze the characters' actions that exemplify the specific values of duty, respect and integrity. Students can refer to specific movie clips for guidance.

Duty

Character: John H. Miller

- Take charge when in charge
 - Throughout most of the film, John H. Miller diligently led the eight men.
 - Miller often was forced to make difficult decisions - even when the other men did not necessarily agree.
 - Example: When the fate of a German soldier was in the hands of Miller and his troops, most of his troops were ready to kill the soldier; however, Miller decided to send him back to surrender to the Allied forces. Despite the misgivings of the other soldiers, Miller took charge and made the final call.

Character: General George C. Marshall

- Issue clear instructions
 - When given the news of the three Ryan brothers dying in battle, General Marshall had to make a decision on whether he should send a team to save the last Ryan brother or not; this proved to be an incredibly difficult decision because everyone was unsure about Private Ryan's distinct location.
 - Example: General Marshall stated, "If that boy is alive, we are going to find somebody to find him and we are going to get the hell out of there." Even though his subordinates were unsure whether or not *saving Private Ryan* was valuable to the war effort, General Marshall clearly made a decision and stated that Private Ryan was to be saved.

Respect:

Character: John H. Miller

- Resolve conflicts between those on your team
 - When leading a team of many people, a leader always has to unite the team members and remind them of their common goal in order to resolve conflicts between the members of the team.
 - Example: Reiben, fed up with the mission decided to leave the team because he no thought that *saving Private Ryan* was a worthwhile mission. As a result, another soldier, Horvath, pulled his gun in order to make Reiben reconsider his decision. Captain Miller was forced to stop the conflict; he confessed that even though he did not care for Private Ryan - a complete stranger - he was going

through with the mission because he wanted to return home to the US. Therefore, he was able to resolve conflicts by reminding them that all of the soldiers were wishing for the war to end and for their return to the United States.

Character: Daniel Jackson

- Put the safety of your subordinates above all others
 - Private Jackson, a trained sharpshooter, is seen protecting his fellow men by using his training to put the safety of his comrades above all else.
 - Example: When a sniper fatally wounded one of the members of the team, Private Caparzo, Private Jackson put the safety of the other members above his other objectives by shooting the German sniper. Once the German sniper is dead, the other soldiers can go out in the open - even though it is too late for Caparazo. (See Clip E)

Integrity

Character: James Francis Ryan

- Choose the difficult right over the easy wrong
 - After the team found Private Ryan, Ryan had to make a choice between going back with the team or staying and fighting for the war effort; he had to choose between the easy way out or the right thing to do.
 - Example: After being informed about the death of his brothers and his mom's despair, Ryan felt awful, but he decided to stay and fight. He claimed that he considered his fellow soldiers his brothers and he made the right decision to continue fighting—even though he had an easy way out of the war. He chose to do the right thing where as many people in his shoes would have just returned home to the US to see their family and friends. (See Clip D)

Character: Mike Horvath

- Credit subordinates for good performance
 - Mike Horvath was seen crediting, Private Ryan, a practical soldier for his decision in not returning to the US immediately and choosing to stay and fight.
 - Example: Horvath stated that Private Ryan's was a means of producing something positive from a negative situation. He credited his decision due to his perseverance and bravery to choose to stay and defend the bridge against the German soldiers. He showed integrity because even though he did not know or like Private Ryan, he still chose to share his positive opinion on Private Ryan's decision.

Part Three: Servant Leadership in *Saving Private Ryan*

Objective

After viewing the film *Saving Private Ryan*, and reading the appropriate resources, students will discuss the concept and application of Servant Leadership in the film.

The Servant Leader

Character: Captain John Miller

- Characteristic: Proper Persuasion
 - Example: Captain Miller shows his true reason for wanting to complete the mission, (Clip A) as being related to his ethics and values in regards to his family and returning home. He did not use his status or power to force his crew into the search for Private Ryan. He told them simply what he thought was right, and backed it up with a story of his wife with which hopefully the other men would connect, which was successful.
 - Example: (Clip G) Miller listens to his men complain about the mission, but instead of joining in on bashing the questionable endangerment of several men to save one, he states that he is confident in the intentions of the mission. He does not force the idea of acceptance on his men but rather calmly continues on the mission, leading by example.

Character: Michael Horvath

- Characteristic: Proper Persuasion
 - Example: Horvath (See Clip A) decided to take matters into his own hands literally, and attempts to threaten Reiben with his gun to not leave the mission. A servant leader would not use force or abuse power, even that of a weapon, to get their desired result. Richard Reiben wants to return to the lines and desert the mission also has an example of persuasion gone wrong.

Character: Captain John Miller

- Characteristics: Respect and Understanding
 - Example: Miller (See Clip A) does not order Reiben to either remain in the company or be shot, but instead gives him a choice to remain with the mission or go back to the war. Miller shows his ability to respect the decisions of others in the way that he does not take his position of command as an excuse to not give attention to the opinions of his men.
 - Example: Miller (Clip G) allows his men to complain about the mission continuously. They ask him to also share his thoughts on the mission. Instead of reprimanding them, he replies that he thinks the mission has a very important objective with very noble intentions. He allows his men to share their concerns, but does not reveal his own personal doubt. Servant leaders believe their members are more than just workers, and that they have more value than just laboring over their duties. They encourage input and contribution of ideas.

Contributions from Drexel University students Peter Campion, Greta Juyte and Kathleen Keenan, created in December 2012.