

Foundations

Do I really need a leader?

Best for ages 3-8. The purpose of this discussion is to help children understand the inherent value of always having a leader/mentor/role model whom they trust, and who they look up to.

It is important for children to understand that a “leader” is someone who cares about them and has no ulterior motives. A leader has the mission of helping them become the very best version of themselves. To ensure that they understand this concept, ask your child for some examples of appropriate “leaders” and have them explain why they chose their examples.

Children often have an association with “leadership” of people telling other people what to do. This is a great opportunity to teach about the broader concept of leadership.

The Mesilas Yesharim talks about appreciating leadership from the vantage point of watching someone walk through a corn maze in an attempt to find a gazebo. Show your child some images of corn mazes or draw one out on your own. Explore with your child how much more difficult, if not impossible, it would be for the person to reach the gazebo without guidance from someone who already went through the maze and knows which paths lead to the gazebo.

Just like in the corn maze example, a leader is often someone who has gone through the stage of life/situation that we are currently in and therefore has the insight and guidance to help us. Explain to your child that a leader can also be someone who has expertise in the area that we need guidance in, without having gone through it themselves.

For Example:

Parent: What does a leader mean to you?

Child: A leader is someone who tells you what to do.

Parent: That is one type of leader – yes. When I think of a leader, I think of someone that I look up to, that I trust. I often think of someone I admire who I can turn to for advice. Someone who I know really cares about me. Can you think of anyone like that?

Once you and your child explore a few examples, move on to the second part of the conversation.

Parent: Look at this picture of a corn maze. This person is trying to get to that gazebo by himself! Do you think he'll be able to without any help?

Child: No way!

Parent: If he asks someone who has already gone through the maze, it will help him reach it much quicker. That's kind of what leaders are supposed to do for us, in our lives, when we need guidance.



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