“Our son wasn’t someone who talked about goals or what he wanted to be when he grew up. We noticed a change once he started the Mindset Program. He now discusses leadership with us and sets goals for what he wants to do in the future.”

— Middle School Parent
Dear Educator,

Welcome to Mindset Matters for Middle School, a leadership curriculum designed for grades 5–8 to build positive culture change through character education development. Our goal is to help EACH student reach his or her potential to be great leaders in this world, and to support you in the teaching of key leadership actions, including:

- Courage
- Honor
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Perseverance
- Innovation
- Communication
- Confidence

Inside the program, you will find a range of flexible and fun teaching materials, including videos, grade-level specific activities, and extension ideas to build leadership into everyday discussions.

Each of the lessons and activities connect to students’ lives, offer real-world exploration and application of leadership practices, and align with national and state standards for character education.

Engaging activities help students learn to trust each other and themselves, to be fair and to care—giving them the tools to be effective leaders and good followers not just at home and in school, but also within their community and the world at large.

Thank you for being a part of this mission!

Sincerely,

Your Friends at Mindset Matters for Middle School

We Want to Hear From You!

As a program leader, we would love to hear from you! Please share your experiences and suggestions by emailing us at info@mymindsetmatters.org or visiting us at www.mymindsetmatters.org:

- How are you using the program?
- What successes have you had as a result of using the program?
- What improvements can we make to better serve your curriculum needs?
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About the Program

Mindset Matters **inspires** and **engages** youth in developing personal leadership skills. Built on the foundation that leaders are not born, but developed through personal choices and practice, the Mindset for Middle School program embraces a mindset of positive change.

By cultivating the mindset of leaders, grades 5–8 students develop critical skillsets that empower their choices and promote constructive behavior. The character education curriculum is designed to influence mindsets to reduce negative behaviors such as bullying and increase positive behaviors such as academic performance and interpersonal communication, both in and outside of the classroom. Through the course of lessons, positive behaviors and actions begin to replace destructive and negative ones, fueling both safe schools and communities.

The program delivers these key aspects and more in twenty-first century style by offering flexible instruction, video enhancements, and a powerful connection to students’ lives.

* The **flexible and easy-to-use materials** are designed with you in mind to offer both instructional guidance and opportunity to apply your own teaching style. Lessons can be taught in short or long class periods, and can be expanded by using extension activities and discussion questions.

* The **multimedia supplements** enhance the core curriculum by showing real-life leaders in engaging video formats. Blending humor with serious messages, the video series delivers amusing and informative content to augment the print materials.

* **Authentic student engagement** is at the core of the Mindset Matters approach, and each lesson and activity is carefully constructed to invite learners to systematically practice leadership skills in tangible, concrete ways.
Building strong leaders starts with strong leaders. Larry Yatch, a veteran Navy SEAL, and Todd Alexander, a corporate leader specializing in culture and leadership development, are the innovative leaders of Mindset Matters for Middle School. Combining real-life leadership experience with their shared desire to change the world by guiding the leaders of tomorrow, Larry and Todd are deeply committed to Mindset Matters.

Larry Yatch

After serving in Iraq, Larry faced an injury that would take him away from his role as a Navy SEAL. Rather than be defeated, Larry applied his lens of expertise to bring the Mindset Matters for Middle School to life with the goal of shaping a safe world by training young leaders in school, the community, and beyond. Larry’s extensive and global military training bring a unique aspect to the Mindset character development education by harnessing his experiences serving as a leader in some of the world’s most dangerous situations.

Todd Alexander

Todd’s background as a Vice President of Leadership and Culture at one of the nation’s largest private companies helps guide the Mindset curriculum by offering a diverse perspective on leadership training. His work includes leading large companies, orchestrating leadership development within corporations, transforming company culture, and leadership coaching. Todd has taken his expertise in the workplace and is now applying it to leadership and culture development within our schools.

Mindset Matters Key Messages:

- Leaders are developed through education and experience
- Building character is a personal choice
- Leaders use a common and shared language
- Everyone is a leader—regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity
- Leadership takes practice
- Leaders learn and grow through failures
Mindset Matters for Middle School is a teacher-friendly curriculum designed with you in mind.

Standards Aligned
Lessons and activities are aligned to national and state standards, as well as learning expectations, in one or more of the following disciplines:

- Character Education (Character Counts! Six Pillars of Character)
- Health (National Health Education Standards)
- English Language Arts (Common Core State Standards Initiative)

Twenty-First Century Skill-Building
Activities are designed to foster leadership mindsets by engaging students in important twenty-first century skills. These include developing effective problem-solving techniques, critical thinking capabilities, and engaging in creative and innovative collaborations. Communication is a foundational element built within each lesson, and students learn to guide and lead others, as well as take responsibility for their own actions.

Student-Centered
Student-centered learning is the principle architectural element throughout the curriculum. Using a project-based approach, lessons are designed to place learners in engaging activities creating an environment where they learn by doing. This enables students to synthesize and apply leadership tools to help create a healthy mindset. Activities are also differentiated by grade levels, giving you the flexibility to fit each piece of the lesson within the needs of your students.

Real-World Connections
Students often learn best when they are able to connect lesson content to the context of their own lives. Throughout the curriculum, students work together to create a common and shared language around leadership and character education, and then use their shared mindset to make meaningful changes within their immediate world and beyond.
Module and Lesson Structure

Instructional Flow
Mindset Matters for Middle School consists of eight core leadership modules. The instructional flow develops a leadership mindset by using one topic to fuel inquiry into the next, creating a collective curriculum linking together each facet of character education.

The curriculum is designed to be taught in the following order:

1. **Courage**: not the absence of fear, but making the right choices and taking the right actions in spite of fear.
2. **Honor**: living up to a Code of Behavior in which the concerns of the group come before your own.
3. **Respect**: shown through positive feelings of approval and earned through valued actions.
4. **Responsibility**: having the power to act and the requirement to meet a standard of performance.
5. **Communication**: demonstrated through our ability to coordinate action and is dependent on shared understanding.
6. **Confidence**: the level of certainty in your ability to achieve an unexpected outcome.
7. **Perseverance**: continued effort toward a goal, despite challenges, difficulties, and failures.
8. **Innovation**: bringing into the possible that which was impossible.

Module Design
Within each of the eight modules, you will find three 15-minute lessons that may be taught separately or together, student activities, and supplemental instructional resources.

Each module includes the following:

- **Learning Objectives** help shape the direction of lesson content and outline the skills students will master. Objectives are based on national and state standards, and encompass desirable character education traits.

- **Essential Questions** introduce students to the big-picture concept of each leadership topic. Questions are designed to elicit higher-order thinking and spark student interest.

- **Lesson 1 Investigate** is the first 15-minute mini-lesson that hooks students into the core leadership concept, initiates inquiry, and engages higher-order thinking skills.

- **Lesson 2 Explore** is the second 15-minute mini-lesson in which students review and expand on the key leadership terms, make sense of character education in the context of their lives, and explore initial applications of leadership practices in real-world contexts.

- **Lesson 3 Challenge** is the third 15-minute mini-lesson and incorporates project-based learning as students work individually and collaboratively to demonstrate leadership in action. Students synthesize, systematically practice, and reflect on the leadership concepts.

- **Integrated Teacher Tips** help point out instructional ideas, reinforcement activities, and fun leadership facts to share with your students.
• **Student Guide and Activity Sheets** are ensconced within each of the three 15-minute mini-lessons, creating opportunities for creative collaboration and individual exploration of topics. Student take-home resources are also included with key terms and thinking points.

• **Grade-Level Differentiation** offers developmentally appropriate activities and assignments for Level 1 Learners (grades 5 and 6) and Level 2 Learners (grades 7 and 8). This enables you to modify assignments based on student needs and better assess student understanding.

• An **Answer Key and Glossary** of terms is included in each module for your reference.

• **Videos** compliment each module and can be used to support key concepts within the lessons. Call outs denote where videos may be integrated into instructional flow, as well as follow-up discussion questions.

### Customizable and Flexible

All eight modules are highly customizable and flexible in instructional delivery. By segmenting grade-level activities and keeping each lesson to 15-minute time blocks, modules may be taught in one long class period or integrated in smaller intervals as time permits in your classroom. Topics within lessons and discussion questions enable you to incorporate your own leadership examples, experiences, and illustrations to bring the leadership ideas to life for your students.

### Best Practices in Program Implementation

• **You’re a Leader:** as a teacher and leader, you are already modeling character: make it count!

• **Talk About Real-Life:** students appreciate and connect with your experiences. Share your moments of honor, courage, respect, responsibility, communication, confidence, perseverance, and innovation.

• **Ask Questions:** engage your students in ongoing dialogue about character development and ask them questions about how their mindsets change throughout the program.

• **Observe and Acknowledge:** throughout the program, be on the look out for organic moments when you see character development in action in your classroom. Acknowledge your students’ acts of leadership, big or small.
How to Access Course Materials

To access course materials, follow the steps below:

1. Go to mymindsetmatters.org.
2. Click on the Resources tab.
3. Click the Mindset Matters for Middle School graphic.
4. Type the User Name provided by Mindset Matters.
5. Type the Password provided by Mindset Matters.
6. Access to all of the Mindset Matters for Middle School modules is available by following these steps.

Frequently Asked Questions

You’ve asked, and we’ve answered!

Who is the program for?

Mindset Matters for Middle School is designed for grades 5–8 students and offers grade-level differentiation to help you best meet the needs within your class, no matter the age or skill range.

Why was the program created?

Larry Yatch, a combat veteran Navy SEAL officer, started the program to apply his hard-earned lessons and pass them on to the next generation to enhance the lives of others and promote positive change in the world. The program achieves this by offering youth concrete ways to practice leadership and character development skills. By positively changing students’ mindsets, negative behaviors such as bullying are reduced while communication and collaboration thrive.

How do I know if this program will work?

Mindset Matters for Middle School is a research-based curriculum and we conduct pre- and post-lesson research from students in the program using a questionnaire framework developed in collaboration with the Rochester Area Foundation and Mayo Clinic. The evidence-based research focuses on determining the breadth of understanding of the leadership behavior traits addressed in the curriculum, gauging the level of commitment to practice some or all of the behavior traits, and determining the scope of behavioral changes as a result of the curriculum.
How do I fit this program into my already busy day?

The lessons are very flexible, aligned to core content standards, and may be taught in small intervals throughout several weeks or in one large chunk. Student activities are also highly flexible and may be used in the classroom for collaborative assignments or as take-home individual assignments.

How much time do I need to prepare for the program?

Each lesson requires minimal preparation and supplies, and each module contains robust extension resources to customize lessons to your classroom, making it easy to bring it into your classroom anytime. Whether you have just a few minutes or an entire class period, the curriculum can be used in multiple ways for meaningful impact.

How much time does the program take to deliver?

The beauty of Mindset Matters for Middle School is that you have control over program delivery. You can opt to teach each module in one class period, or divide it into several small and manageable mini-lessons. Instructional tips are included throughout the modules for suggestions on how to easily implement it into your classroom.

“In 2013-14, our Middle School saw an across-the-board improvement in our state standardized test scores. Mindset for Middle School is the only significant change we made to our curriculum this year, and I’m convinced it had a positive impact on our test score results.”

– Middle School Principal