

Prefect Induction Service Address 2012

I wholeheartedly congratulate all of you today on being selected Prefects of the School for 2012, which is a wonderful achievement. You have been chosen by staff and students of the School and obviously have our collective support and best wishes for the year ahead.

Whilst you have all committed to the position, I wonder if you would have said yes if your leadership role may have led to persecution.

In the reading today Moses is called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt as they flee from abuse, persecution and oppression. The people are naturally fearful, apprehensive and full of doubt as they are led into unknown wilderness. It takes great courage and conviction by Moses as he implores his people to “not be afraid and to stand firm”. They are to “Go Forward” in faith and with belief and resolution.

I trust that you would have picked up that our School motto is taken from this very reading. Fortunately, unlike the Israelites, we are not at risk of persecution here at Guildford Grammar School; however, the School Prefects for 2012 are likely to face adversity in their roles. There will be challenges, confusion at times and maybe even fear, when you have to take a stand or speak to the School about what you believe in and value.

Leadership calls you to look forward, to see a vision for our School and to work towards it together as a team, inspiring others to get involved. The entire Year 12 class of 2012 has a responsibility to build on the leadership of past students, to continue to build on our dynamic and supportive culture, in which students are engaged, enthused and focussed on achieving to their personal level of excellence.

What some students fail to realise is that you are the ones with the most power to enact change and to work together to build an incredible School community. Every staff member will do their utmost to support you but to “Go Forward” the energy largely comes from your passion, enthusiasm and drive.

Young men, you would all realise that to lead you need to take responsibility, be prepared to take a stand, forge new directions and to be respected for your actions; however, true leadership has at its heart the ideal of service.

Servant leadership has at its core the desire to enhance the growth of individuals in the community and to increase collective responsibility, a sense of belonging and team-work. This type of leadership requires empathy, listening, awareness, collaboration, trust and the ethical use of power and authority.

This morning, I ask the Prefects and more broadly the entire Year 12 cohort to reflect on the following questions

In what ways can I utilise my unique skills and talents to serve the School community?

And also

How will my leadership enable the School to “Go Forward” and flourish into the future?

Jesus provided a powerful and symbolic statement regarding the importance of service and the equality of all, when he washed his disciples’ feet.

Having washed their feet Jesus challenged his disciples saying

“I am telling you the truth: no slave is greater than his master, and no messenger is greater than the one who sent him.”

This morning I will wash each of your feet as a symbol of Servant Leadership. As Headmaster of the School I am obviously in a position of authority and responsibility. With this role I am called to offer my service to each and every member of this School community.

I wash your feet this morning as a simple offering and gift that reminds each of us that we are called to serve each other, to respect each other and to have empathy for each other. True leadership carries with it great responsibility and commitment to the people you are working with.

I wish each of you all the best for your leadership roles this year and look forward to supporting you and working with you.

Remember, real leadership is about giving more than receiving and is well summed up by the following quote from Cullen Hightower

“A true measure of your worth includes all the benefits others have gained from your success”