1. Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time. (350 words)

A follower, a mute in conversation, and an eye-avoider.

This was how I defined myself. I worked best behind the scenes like a good soldier following orders. However, things slowly changed when I unknowingly let my best friend convince me to be in charge of the 2020 Christmas celebration for my Youth Worship community.

Meeting #1 - D minus 43 days

I knew I looked pale as my whole body was cold, but full of sweat. I was always the one being told what to do. So, I went full mute during the meeting not knowing what to say.

Result: the committee members lost patience, they jokingly cut each other’s ideas, and unrelated conversations like school gossip and such ensued. It was unproductive and a waste of everyone’s two hours of life as no action plans were being generated.

Meeting #2 - D minus 35 days

This time, I reflected on my mistakes, sought guidance from other leaders, and scientific problem-solving methods. I collected data for an ideal Christmas celebration, identified key factors for a successful event, and broke down those factors into sub-factors: theme, budget, safety protocols, performances, venue, and even back-up plans. I have prepared a clear meeting agenda and emailed it to the committees prior to the meeting.

Result: I gained confidence knowing what to say and I led, resulting in an organized meeting where everyone had their ideas written down and no one cut each other off when talking. We have clear action plans and I was able to delegate tasks properly.

Meeting > #2

I employed similar strategies and, like a chain reaction, the next meetings fell right into place and action plans were executed properly just in time.

Epilogue

Cheerful applause was heard in support of our committees. They had a very meaningful and enjoyable celebration for the first time during the pandemic, which brought tears to my eyes. This event was what slowly made me voluble, able to make eye contact, and less of a follower. While I still have a lot to learn, I have now emerged out of my comfort zone.