

# Charting the Course

**Main Point:** Great leaders value and use strategic planning.

**Scripture:** Joshua 6; Proverbs 16:3; Proverbs 21:5

**Memory Verse:** Proverbs 16:3 – “Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.”

## 1. Welcome & Opening

- **Transition into story:**  
“I want to tell you a true story that illustrates why planning is so important.”
- **Read story (dramatic tone):**

A young photographer flew into northern Alaska to capture the beauty of the tundra. He brought everything he thought he needed—clothes, food, weapons, cameras, and 1,400 pounds of supplies. For months, everything went well. But by late summer, he realized he had made one critical mistake. He never arranged a plane to come pick him up. That fall, he died alone in the wilderness, hundreds of miles from civilization.

That’s a tragic ending—all because he failed to plan one crucial step.”

- **Ask:**
  1. “Think of a time when you failed to plan. What happened?”
  2. “Have you ever planned something but things still didn’t go according to plan? How did you handle it?”
  3. “What are some advantages of planning ahead? Why do we sometimes skip planning even when we know it’s smart?”
- **Say this:**  
“When we talk about leadership, planning is critical. We call it *charting the course*. This means strategically mapping out and evaluating the steps of a project so that the chances of success go way up.”

## 2. Teaching Point One – Great Leaders Value Strategic Planning

- **Scripture:** Joshua 6:1–5, 15–16, 20.  
(Have students take turns reading verses aloud.)

- **Say this:**  
“Joshua had just taken over after Moses’ death. The Israelites had been wandering for 40 years, and Jericho was the first big obstacle in the Promised Land. The walls were huge, the city was strong, and the odds were against them. But God gave Joshua a plan—an unusual plan. March around the city. Do it for seven days. Then shout. It didn’t make sense, but it was God’s strategy.”
- **Ask:**
  1. “From a human perspective, God’s plan seems crazy. What do you think the Israelites thought when they heard it?”
  2. “Why do you think the people obeyed? What role did Joshua’s confidence play?”
  3. “Why do followers respond more positively when a leader has a clear plan?”
  4. “Have you ever been on a team that failed because there was no clear plan? What was that like?”
- **Say this:**  
“Great leaders value planning. They don’t just rush in—they chart the course and inspire others by showing them the way forward.”

### 3. Teaching Point Two – Great Leaders Use Strategic Planning

- **Say this:**  
“It’s one thing to *say* you value planning, but it’s another thing to actually *use* it. Let’s look at four stages of strategic planning.”

#### Step 1 – Determine the Scope and Goals

- **Say this:**  
“Leaders define what success looks like. They set boundaries and goals so the team knows what they’re aiming for.”
- **Ask:**  
“When you start something, do you usually think about the end goal, or just jump in?”

#### Step 2 – Calculate People and Resources

- **Say this:**  
“Leaders need the right people in the right positions, and the right resources to get the job done. That means knowing your team’s strengths and weaknesses.”

- **Ask:**  
“Have you ever been put in the wrong role on a team? How did it affect the outcome?”

### **Step 3 – Execute the Plan**

- **Say this:**  
“A plan is useless if no one actually carries it out. Execution requires discipline, teamwork, and focus.”
- **Ask:**  
“Have you ever been stuck in planning mode but never got to action? Why do you think that happens?”

### **Step 4 – Evaluate Progress**

- **Say this:**  
“Leaders stop and ask: ‘How are we doing? How can we improve?’ Evaluation keeps the team sharp and moving forward.”
- **Ask:**  
“Does evaluation motivate you or intimidate you? Why?”

## **4. Scripture Tie-In**

- **Read Proverbs 16:3** → “Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.”
- **Read Proverbs 21:5** → “The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.”
- **Say this:**  
“God wants us to plan. But He also wants us to commit our plans to Him, because He’s the One who brings success.”

## **5. Living It Out**

- **Activity (optional):**  
“Let’s practice charting the course. Imagine we want to plan a youth-led service project or outreach. In small groups, walk through the four steps:
  5. Scope & goals
  6. People & resources

7. Execution plan
8. Evaluation plan”

(Have groups share back with everyone.)

- **Ask:**  
“Which of these four steps is most important to you, and why?”

## 6. Final Challenge & Prayer

- **Say this:**  
“Joshua didn’t conquer Jericho with brute strength. He conquered it by following God’s plan. Great leaders value planning and use planning. This week, when you face a challenge, don’t just wing it. Stop and ask: ‘Lord, what’s Your plan?’ Then chart the course.”
- **Challenge Verse:** Proverbs 16:3 – Encourage them to memorize it and pray it before starting anything big this week.
- **Closing Prayer:**  
“Lord, thank You for showing us the power of Your plans. Help us to be leaders who chart the course—not just relying on our own ideas, but seeking Your wisdom, valuing strategy, and following through with courage. Guide our steps and make our plans succeed as we commit them to You. Amen.”