



Ethical Cadet Essay

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Going into my third year in JROTC, I have realized that leadership, character, and service aren't just random words. These words define who I am and steer my actions throughout life. As I think about my time in JROTC, I can confidently say that these values have become strongly embedded in my daily life and have shaped my decisions and approach to challenges and achievements. From earning "Cadet of the Month" early in my JROTC time to climbing through the ranks to Staff Sergeant, I have continually worked to incorporate these core values as a leader, squad member, and team member.

In JROTC, leadership is not just about the title or rank you hold, it is about motivating and inspiring others to work together to accomplish a common goal or objective. As a squad leader for two years, I am responsible for the success of my squad and ensuring that everyone stays on track during drills, events, and tasks we need to complete. Being a leader in JROTC taught me that leadership requires a lot of patience, responsibility, and the ability to listen. I had to learn to understand my cadets' strengths and weaknesses and modify my approach accordingly. This made me realize that being an impactful leader is not about just being in charge, but about supporting those around me: inspiring them to succeed and helping them grow. For example, one of the most satisfying experiences as a Squad Leader was a drill. Our squad was struggling to march together

in sync. I took the initiative to remain composed, comforted my team, and helped them march one by one so we could all march in sync. By leading by example, and showing patience by teaching them, my squad was able to march in sync and get a good score on our drill test. This experience taught me that good leadership involves staying calm and collected under pressure, being adaptable, and always putting the needs of the team first.

Character is a huge part of a person's foundation of who they are and how they interact with others. In JROTC, character is essential because we are expected to have values of honesty, integrity, and respect for other people. Throughout my time in the JROTC program, I have pushed myself to demonstrate strong character by being dependable and not relying on others. I am accountable for my actions and respectful to both my peers and instructors. For example, I always try to set high standards for myself when it comes to sports and school. I believe that if I say I am going to do something, I will follow through on my commitments. I was entrusted with leading a new cadet orientation; therefore, I needed to set a good example and make sure the expectations were clear. I committed to being a positive role model for the incoming cadets by showing respect for the rules, communicating clearly, and offering guidance whenever necessary.

Service is about giving back to the community and putting the needs of others before myself. In JROTC, service is key to everything we do in the class, whether it's participating in community service projects or even encouraging fellow cadets. One of the key lessons I remembered that made an impact on me was filling up food boxes at Saint Mary's Food Bank. It really made an influence on me because it made me realize how many people need help on the streets. Another key lesson that shaped me as a person is making cards for veterans who live in veteran homes. I liked that service experience because it made the veterans happy. The opportunities that JROTC has shown me allowed me to see firsthand the impact that small and big services can have on the community.

In conclusion, my time in JROTC has had a huge impact on me. JROTC has taught me that leadership, character, and service are not just concepts to be learned: it is about the values to be taught correctly and lived. These values are critical to both personal growth and the overall success of my squad. As a Squad Leader, I have learned

that leadership requires responsibility and commitment to my squad's growth. I've learned that character is the foundation of trust and respect, and that we all must uphold a high standard of integrity. In the end, service has taught me the importance of putting others first and how small actions can make a huge impact. These three main core values are not only essential in JROTC but are fundamental to becoming a responsible, committed, and effective member of society.

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