

ready to lead

By Ruth Hassall

Reviewed by Jess Bishop
Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs

Having just finished reading *Ready to Lead* I felt eager to write this book review. What can I say? I think this is the book about youth leadership that I would love to have written myself. Ruth starts as she means to go on – and connected with me about her experiences of moving into leadership early on in life. She has an authentic style to her writing; relating her own experience to leadership models, the Bible and where young people are at (from her own experience as a young person and also a youth pastor).

Each chapter opens with a 'Dear Ruth' scenario from a young person, followed by options for how you would respond – this immediately got me thinking. The end of each chapter has action points and ideas for further study – particularly useful if you are reading this as a group or just like a challenge.

Ruth starts with defining Christian leadership and looks at: you as a young leader; being a follower of Jesus; what your heart is like; and what makes you, you. She moves on to look at team dynamics thankfully without too much jargon; followed by leading where you

are at – or rather where God has placed you. The idea of us being 'double agents' (or living two lives) is addressed sensitively and honestly. Ruth is extremely supportive in this chapter especially around the big taboo – what we're like at home with our family!

The final chapters help us look outside our situation - the Bigger Picture reminds us that there is a whole world out there with many issues that possibly God would like us involved in; I found it very helpful to be guided to biographies about inspirational Christian Leaders– I always like to be recommended books by people who have actually read them!

Having had experience of leading the adult Growing Leaders Course and accompanying a number of young people through it I was keen to see two things in Ruth's book: Firstly that the book wasn't patronising to young people and secondly that the emphasis on mentoring was strong.

I am pleased to say that I wasn't disappointed - I would be proud to share this book with young people; I think it is accessible,

gets to the point, and is friendly yet challenging. The idea of being mentored and having a mentor is also strongly sold, with tips on how to get a mentor and what can be expected in a mentoring session.

I want to go out and buy many copies of *Ready to Lead*, as I can already think of young people I would like to give this to. This book is appropriate for young people at all stages of leadership and would make a refreshing read for adults and certainly youth leaders! Thanks Ruth - a worthy addition to leadership writing.

