

## PURPOSE

To place students on the path of aspiring toward heroic excellence.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Explain **heroes** as people who have lived excellent lives.
2. Practice a heroic choice.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- **Human Dignity Hero Award** worksheet (see Materials)
- Supplemental materials:
  - **“Maria Keller, 13-Year-Old Minnesota Girl, Donates 1 Million Books,”** **Huffington Post** article  
([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/11/maria-keller-books-1-million\\_n\\_4086011.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/11/maria-keller-books-1-million_n_4086011.html))
  - **“Young Wonder: Maria Keller,”** **CNN** video  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0HenL5zLzs>)

## VOCABULARY

- **hero:** a person who lives an excellent life, respecting the dignity of all people
- **habit:** a person’s regular practice or tendency, especially one difficult to give up

## PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lessons.

Explain to students that they will practice again using their powers to think and choose. Model for them their exercise—to brainstorm a way they could intentionally show appreciation for another person in their life, such as a teacher or a friend or a parent—by explaining one way you would show appreciation for, or one way you have been shown appreciation by, another.

Ask:

- Is this an example of an excellent or non-excellent action? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to regularly take intentional actions like this one?

**Step 2:** Teach that intentional, excellent actions put us on the path toward becoming heroes.

Ask students: When we hear the word “hero,” what sort of qualities do we think of? List these qualities on the board.

Explain: The true heroes, whether they are known by the entire world, or whether they’re hidden and quiet, are those who live an excellent life. They do this by making many excellent choices! With each choice, they grow in excellence until they can be considered heroes—small steps, one at a time!

**Step 3:** Teach the three characteristics of a hero.

Ask students to repeat the three characteristics of a hero with you, along with sign language for each, to make a **Hero’s Statement**:

1. Heroes try daily to climb the ladder of excellence. [climb a ladder]
2. Heroes try again when they fall. [go down low, then reach high]
3. Heroes respect human dignity. [hug self, then open arms to the world]

For each, follow with a role play:

1. Heroes try daily to climb the ladder of excellence.

Explain: Every morning, you have a hard time getting out of bed when your mom wakes you up for school. What are your options?

- (a) Get out of bed right away.
- (b) Wait until you hear your mom returning before you get out of bed.
- (c) Ignore your mom entirely, even when she asks two or three times.

Ask: What is the best option in this situation, and why? Which adds most to your excellence? Model your own answer once the students have discussed.

2. Heroes try again when they fall.

Explain: You’ve made it five days this week without talking back to your dad when he asks you to pick up the toys in your room, but on the sixth day, you get annoyed, talk back, and make him angry. What are your options?

- (a) Throw a toy at him in annoyance.
- (b) Apologize right away, and listen.
- (c) Talk back again, the next time he asks.

Ask: What is the best option in this situation, and why? Which adds most to your excellence?  
Model your own answer once the students have discussed.

3. Heroes respect human dignity.

Explain: Your teacher celebrates her birthday. What are your options?

- (a) Listen extra hard all day.
- (b) Stay quiet when others sing her happy birthday.
- (c) Forget that it's her birthday.

Ask: What is the best option in this situation, and why? Which adds most to your excellence?  
Model your own answer once the students have discussed.

**Step 4:** Ask students to imagine a hero.

Draw a stick figure on the board, and call him Dignity Dan. Explain to the class that Dignity Dan wants to become a teacher and help change children's lives by teaching them about themselves and the world, but he is afraid of talking in front of big groups.

Then work with the students to list actions he can take in order to prepare to become a heroic teacher, as a start to brainstorming heroes from their own lives. Students should next work to complete the **Human Dignity Hero Award** worksheet, drawing a hero from their life accomplishing something heroic.

**Step 5:** Summarize: Today we have begun to see how everything fits together. Because humans have special powers to think and choose, only they can become heroes! To become a hero is to make consistent, daily choices to grow in excellence, to try when we fall, and to respect human dignity—our own dignity and the dignity of those around us.

## FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to complete and hand to their heroes the **Human Dignity Hero Award** worksheet.

## SUPPLEMENTS

**Supplement 1:** We can pursue heroic excellence our entire lives. Use the **"Maria Keller, 13-Year-Old Minnesota Girl, Donates 1 Million Books,"** [Huffington Post](#) article, and **"Young Wonder: Maria Keller,"** [CNN](#) video, to demonstrate this concept.

Ask:

- Is one excellent action enough for us to be heroes? Why or why not?
- How can you pursue excellence for the rest of your life?

# HUMAN DIGNITY HERO AWARD

*You've been a hero to me!*



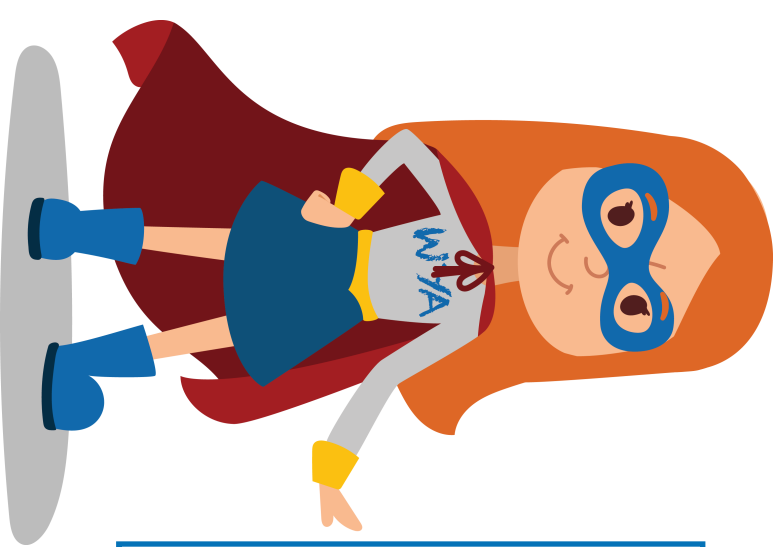
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Human  
Dignity  
Curriculum

# HUMAN DIGNITY HERO AWARD

*You've been a hero to me!*



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