



## 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. Identify concrete ways to imitate a personal hero.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- *I Want to Be a Hero* worksheet (see Materials)
- *A Hero We Know* worksheet (see Materials)
- Supplemental Materials:
  - *“Young Wonders’ stepped up, changed the world,”* CNN article (<http://www.cnn.com/2012/12/20/world/cnnheroes-young-wonders/index.html>)
  - *Great Innovators; “The Wright Brothers and the Airplane,” Story-Bots* video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1LCUtPx73o>)

## 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. [One student wrote me a thank you card at the end of the school year.]

Ask them to brainstorm in pairs, then gather for a class share-out.

**Discussion questions:**

- 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, then write on the board:

- **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

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 developing excellent habits—those regular, intentional actions that are excellent. Brainstorm with a class a list of excellent habits that a person can have.

With each excellent action they take, they add to their bucket of excellence, until they have so much excellence that they can be considered heroes—small steps, one at a time!

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

Write on the board:

1. Heroes try daily to climb the ladder of excellence.
2. Heroes try again when they fall.
3. Heroes respect human dignity.

Ask students to repeat the characteristics with you, along with sign language for each, to make a

**Hero’s Statement:**

1. Every day, I want to grow in excellence, and to do this I climb the ladder. [climb a ladder]
2. Even when I fall, I try again. [go down low, then reach high]
3. I respect human dignity. [hug self, then open arms to the world]

For each, follow with a role play:

1. Every day, I want to grow in excellence, and to do this I climb the ladder.  
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? What pours the most excellence into your bucket? Model your own answer for the students.

- 2. Even when I fall, I try again.

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? What pours the most excellence into your bucket? Model your own answer for the students.

- 3. I respect human dignity.

Explain: A student in the class speaks out of turn. What are your options?

- (a) Correct the student, before the teacher has a chance to say anything.
- (b) Once the teacher speaks, turn to the student and make a face.
- (c) Let the teacher make a correction while you say nothing.

Explain: A new student joins your class. What are your options?

- (a) Say hello and sit with this student at lunch.
- (b) Ignore the student.
- (c) Laugh at the student because he looks different.

Ask: What is the best option in this situation, and why? What pours the most excellence into your bucket? Model your own answer for the students.

**Step 4:** Ask students to fill in the *I Want to Be a Hero* worksheet, identifying steps for their growth in excellence, as well a personal hero whom they could imitate.

**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:

- practice over the course of the next week their daily action for excellence; and
- interview their parents about heroic things they do or did once, using the ***A Hero We Know*** worksheet.

## **SUPPLEMENTS**

**Supplement 1:** Heroic excellence is something we pursue our entire lives. It can begin when we are very young! Use the ***“Young Wonders’ stepped up, changed the world,”*** CNN article to tell the story of young heroes taking heroic actions, then discuss:

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

**Supplement 2:** Share the ***Great Innovators; “The Wright Brothers and the Airplane,”*** StoryBots video, and discuss with the students the way that the ***Hero’s Statement*** could apply to the Wright brothers.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## I WANT TO BE A HERO

**Directions:** Answer each question below.

**1. Someone gets hurt on the playground. What do I do?**

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**2. Someone drops and spills their colored pencils. What do I do?**

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**3. My bedroom gets dusty and cluttered. What do I do?**

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**4. My soccer team loses most of its games this season. What do I do?**

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**5. My mom gets sick and can't make dinner anymore. What do I do?**

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A Hero in My Life: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Why is this person a hero?**

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**2. What can I do to be like them?**

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## A HERO WE KNOW

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Ask your parents the following questions.

**Parents' Note:** Please help your student answer the questions below. This lesson is a part of a series of lessons on the making of excellent choices.

**1. What is a heroic thing you have done in your life?**

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**2. What is one way you have showed respect for another person's human dignity?**

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**3. What is one way that you have overcome a difficulty during your life?**

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## A HERO WE KNOW

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Ask your parents the following questions.

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**1. What is a heroic thing you have done in your life?**

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**2. What is one way you have showed respect for another person's human dignity?**

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**3. What is one way that you have overcome a difficulty during your life?**

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