

PURPOSE

To aspire to become a hero.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand that a hero is one who consistently makes excellent choices.
2. Imitate a personal hero's traits.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- ***Who Do I Want to Be?*** worksheet (see Materials)
- Supplementary materials:
 - o ***The Shoestring Philanthropist, Parade*** article
(<https://parade.com/48501/lindaarking/19-the-shoestring-philanthropist/>)

VOCABULARY

- **hero:** a person who consistently makes excellent choices
- **patience:** the ability to endure present difficulties for a good end or outcome

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Review the previous lessons. Ask volunteer students to present the gadget or technology innovation that they researched, including one way it has contributed to advancement.

Then explain: We have spent this class learning who we are as human persons. We have learned that we each possess human dignity, our unique value as persons, alongside our powers to think and choose.

Ask students: How do we know when a person is excellent?

[through observing the excellent decisions they make]

Step 2: Teach the three markers of heroes, writing the definition and then the markers on the board:

- **hero:** a person who consistently makes excellent choices

1. Heroes live lives set apart from others.

Heroes are rare—because it is rare to find someone who has never stopped trying to live in an excellent way. Because heroes are rare, we consider them extraordinary people: those who have lived their lives beyond ordinary ways. But all of us are called to be heroes and all of us can be heroic in our lives.

2. Heroes don't settle or make exceptions when it comes to excellent choices.

The key to becoming a hero lies in never settling for something less than excellent choices in all our choices and relationships—to choose to always be kind, generous, patient; to keep in mind the consequences our actions will have on our bodies, on our whole selves, on others, and on the world around us.

3. Heroes inspire others to live excellent lives.

Since they are so out-of-the-ordinary, and since they never stop trying to make excellent choices, they stand out by their goodness and excellence—and inspire others to strive for a greater excellence in their own lives.

Step 2: Introduce a hero. Tell the story of Marc Gold, *The Shoestring Philanthropist*, and ask students to think about two questions:

- How does Marc demonstrate excellence?
- What are ways that I can imitate Marc?

In 1989, on a tour of India, Marc Gold met Thinlay, a Tibetan refugee, who invited him to his home. His wife, Tsering, welcomed him, but kept holding her ears. She suffered from a painful, deadly infection. Gold sought out a physician and then bought her the necessary antibiotic, which cost only \$1—saving her life, followed by a hearing aid that cost \$35 and permitted her to return to work. “I was thunderstruck,” he said, “realizing I could restore her hearing for a relative pittance. I thought you had to be wealthy to do such things.”

Since then, Gold has traveled through Asia handing money to the needy in small amounts, as little as 50 cents and rarely amounts larger than \$500. In Vietnam, a small donation permitted a widow to buy a sewing machine and start a business; in Indonesia, a fisherman fixed his boat. All of this money is raised over the course of a few months every year, through conversations with friends in their living rooms. When he travels, he keeps his eyes on the rare cases that may not otherwise be identified by large aid organizations. In all of his work, he encourages others to be shoestring philanthropists—taking a small amount, raising some more funds, and then giving these small amounts to start a chain reaction.

Supplemental Activity:

- Use the *The Shoestring Philanthropist, Parade* article for reference.

Explain: Notice the way that Marc changes his entire life, going forward, after the encounter that he has with a person in need—and that person’s human dignity. What he demonstrates for us is that heroes do not need to come in huge shapes or sizes, but can be created in the smallest acts of kindness, in those constant decisions we make daily to demonstrate excellence.

Step 4: Help students prepare to become heroes. Write on the board:

- **patience:** the ability to endure present difficulties for a good end or outcome

Explain: As we grow in human excellence, with the making of excellent choices, we will need to be prepared to be patient—to try again and again, even when we have a difficult time, even when we make wrong choices, even when it doesn’t seem as if we are growing into heroes.

Ask students to fill in the *Who Do I Want to Be?* worksheet, identifying a personal hero and the steps they will take to imitate a heroic trait of the selected hero, and making a plan to practice patience along the way.

Then ask for student volunteers to share their answers regarding their hero. The teacher should conclude the lesson by modeling his or her own answer with regards to a hero. Finally, discuss the common traits shared by all the heroes.

Step 5: Summarize: We have spent much time looking at the human person’s different powers, the powers to think and choose, and our ability to express our creativity in the making of art, culture, and technology. Now we can see even more clearly the way in which the ultimate goal of the human life is to grow in excellence, as it is the most excellent of people who become heroes.

FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK

Ask students to put into practice their plan of action for imitating their personal hero’s trait, from the *Who Do I Want to Be?* worksheet, and to create a visual summary of their practice—i.e., a photograph, a drawing, a video.

This documentation may contribute to the class’ final **Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC)** newspaper project (see lesson 6B).

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplement 1: Underline practice as a key to growing in excellence.

Explain: In 2008, reporter Malcolm Gladwell published a book called *Outliers: The Story of Success*. In it, he explains that one of the things that makes successful people is “The 10,000 Hour Rule”: successful people spend 10,000 hours practicing their craft before they become successful.

Write on the board:

2 hours/week	4 hours/week	7 hours/week
8 hours/month	16 hours/month	28 hours/month
96 hours/year	192 hours/year	336 hours/year
<u>104 years</u>	<u>52 years</u>	<u>28 years</u>

Research shows that practice isn’t everything when it comes to success—different talents, personal histories, and given opportunities all make a difference. Becoming a hero, however, isn’t about success: it’s about making the most excellent choices, which include practicing those tasks that help us grow in human excellence. Those things that are most important to us on the path to becoming heroes deserve significant time from us every single week—maybe even an hour a day!



Name _____

Date: _____

Who Do I Want To Be?

Directions: Name and draw your hero. Around your hero, write in heroic qualities and/or draw to depict what makes him/ her your hero.

a hero of mine:

Why is this person your hero?

Choose one of your hero's traits to imitate. _____

Explain why this trait is important to human excellence. _____

What will you need to do, and for how many hours in your life will you need to practice to accomplish it?

