

## Lesson 11: The Mission

### PURPOSE

To help students to pursue a mission of excellence and to respect human dignity in their lives.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand their lives as a long-term mission to strive for excellence and to respect human dignity.
2. Recognize the purpose behind actions they take or things they do each day in the light of their personal mission.

### VOCABULARY

- Mission: one's higher purpose or a goal

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Finding Your Mission [video](#)
- How to Write a Personal Mission Statement! [video](#)
- The Mission Statement
- The Steps for Achieving the Mission
- Interim quiz 2

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Motivate students to practice heroism and humility, by considering the rule of the US Marines and how they can apply this to their life (e.g. offering to help a parent or a family member; considering the needs of others as well as our own.)

**Step 2:** Explain that one of the most important “ingredients” necessary for becoming a hero is having a mission, a motivating purpose, or a reason “why” behind everything one does. Explain that, in this lesson, the class will explore more of what this mission entails.

Start by writing the definition of a mission on the board:

Mission: one's higher purpose or goal

To introduce the topic of the mission, play the *Finding Your Mission* [video](#) and ask students to take notes on what their mission is or could be while watching the video. Afterwards, ask them to share their thoughts and impressions.

Note that the video emphasizes some important characteristics of the mission:

Mission is about helping other people.

Mission involves asking myself what genuinely interests me.

Mission involves asking myself what my talents and skills are.

One's mission does not have to be extraordinary.

All people can and should have a mission.

The video captures the nature of mission with the following sentence: "Where your skills and aptitudes meet with the needs of the world, that is your mission."

Ask the students why having a mission or purpose is important. After listening to the students' comments, explain that having a mission provides us with the reason why we should do something or stop doing something. To become excellent, a person needs to grasp the reason why he or she does what they do. Understanding one's mission and purpose is essential to overcoming difficulties and problems in life. If, on certain occasions, someone does not feel motivated to do something like exercising, studying, overcoming anger or being kind to a friend, reminding oneself of the purpose of doing all of these things can help lend willpower.

**Step 3:** Explain that in order to discover one's personal mission, it is helpful to answer the questions: What are my talents? What do I enjoy doing? Who do I want to become? How can I get where I want to be? What are the obstacles I will likely face? What will keep me going after I fall?, etc.

In this class, the students will craft their own personal mission statement. A mission statement is an inspiring statement, usually one or two sentences long, which guides one's actions.

A good mission statement is:

Personal – it should be customized for you and not be generic  
 Positive – it is focused on everything good that you want to be and do  
 In the present tense – you should aim to live this mission already now  
 Visual – it should enable you to imagine who you should be and what you should do  
 Emotional – it should be rooted in values you deeply care about

For example:

"To help save lives by being the best doctor I can be."  
 "To be a best friend, husband, father, colleague there is."  
 "To inspire people to become the best they can be."

A person can also have more than one higher goal in life. All of these goals can be encompassed by the mission statement, either by defining the mission statement in bullets to encompass more than one goal, or to find an overarching mission that incorporates all goals. Show students the [video](#): *How to Write a Personal Mission Statement!*

**Step 4:** Hand out [The Mission Statement](#) worksheet and go through it with the students. Give students a few minutes to reflect and write. Note that they can improve their mission statement at home if they want to take more time.

Ask the students to fill in [The Steps for Achieving the Mission](#) worksheet. The exercise involves working out which life goals are in line with your mission and which steps or actions you will need to take to achieve those goals. When students finish the exercise, ask the volunteers who feel comfortable to share their answers.

Finally, highlight that following one's mission often involves making difficult decisions to practice excellent habits and avoid non-excellent ones throughout life. This is a hard task but certainly achievable. Following one's mission through both hardships and happy times brings true fulfillment. That is why following it is worth the effort and sacrifice.

**Step 5:** Summarize. Recall the importance of having a mission in one's life and repeat the definition of a mission. Remind students of the steps for crafting their mission statement and the goals and actions needed to pursue their mission.

#### **FOLLOW-UP & HOMEWORK**

Ask the students to complete [Interim quiz 2](#) at home and bring it to the next class. Let them know that solving the interim quiz will help them in the Final quiz, which will be administered during the final class.

## THE MISSION STATEMENT

Who am I?

My strengths are:  
 My weaknesses are:  
 I enjoy doing:  
 What do I consider important:

Who do I want to become?

In 10 years, I would like to be:  
 My life goals are:  
 I can help others by:  
 My talents that can help the world are:

How can I become who I want to be?

To get where I want to be in the future, I need to:  
 Habit of excellence I need to develop:  
 Obstacles I will likely face:  
 A person who can help me:

Personal Mission Statement:

Copy your...

Personal Mission Statement:

To achieve my mission, I will need to accomplish these goals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*(you can add additional goals if necessary)*

To accomplish these goals and achieve my mission, I will need to do the following actions:

*(write in the present tense)*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

*(you can add additional actions if necessary)*

***The Steps for Achieving the Mission – Sample Answer***

Copy your...

Personal Mission Statement:

"To help save lives by being the best surgeon I can be."

To achieve my mission, I will need to accomplish these goals:

1. Finish medical school with good grades.
2. Practice as a top-tier surgeon in a hospital for more than 10 years.
3. Be ready to listen to people and be available to help them.

To accomplish these goals and achieve my mission, I will need to do the following actions:  
(write in the present tense)

1. Study hard.
2. Make healthy choices.
3. Practice patience, empathy and kindness towards people in everyday life.
4. Help others whenever I can.

**A. True/false questions**

1. T/F Humans can use their creativity to solve even the most difficult problems.
2. T/F By making excellent choices in everyday situations, one develops habits of excellence.
3. T/F Solidarity is only possible within small groups.
4. T/F Heroism involves possessing academic excellence.
5. T/F Where your skills and aptitudes meet with the needs of the world, that is your mission.

**B. Essay questions**

6. What are some common misconceptions about humility? Mention at least 3.

**C. What is... vocabulary?**

For example, if the answer is “The first letter of the alphabet”, the question is “What is the letter A?”. Or, if the answer is “A paste used to help clean and maintain health of the teeth”, the correct question is “What is toothpaste?”

7. Behaviors acquired through regular practice which help people achieve excellence as persons.
8. Knowing and acknowledging both one’s strengths and limitations
9. Using one’s imagination and ideas to shape the world.
10. A group of people unified in the pursuit of excellence for themselves and others.
11. One’s higher purpose or a goal.

**D. Multiple choice questions**

12. Nelson Mandela embodied heroism by:
- a) Putting others before himself
  - b) Not thinking too highly of himself
  - c) Speaking in front of large crowds
  - d) Being aware that he makes mistakes
13. The mission statement should be:
- a) Positive
  - b) Visual
  - c) Often changed
  - d) Abstract
14. Solidarity:
- a) Is founded on the social nature of persons
  - b) Does not have anything to do with human dignity
  - c) Involves pursuing only one's selfish interests
  - d) Enables people to strive for excellence on the group level
15. Creativity is used:
- a) In art
  - b) Only by artists
  - c) In problem-solving
  - d) By all human beings
16. Which of the following is a habit of excellence:
- a) Sleeping late
  - b) Humility
  - c) Weakness
  - d) Being easily insulted
17. What are the common traits of humble people:
- a) They acknowledge their limitations
  - b) They believe they are worse than others
  - c) They are weak
  - d) They do not boast about their achievements
18. Which of the following applies to heroism:
- a) It is developed through the everyday practice of excellent choices
  - b) It is reserved only for a small number of people
  - c) It involves never making mistakes
  - d) It is enhanced by excellent friendship

**Answer key:**

1. T
2. T
3. F – solidarity is also possible in bigger groups.
4. F – heroism involves possessing habits of personal excellence
5. T
6. One common misconception is that humility is a sign of weakness. It is wrong because one needs to be strong to recognize and acknowledge his limitations. The second misconception is that humility means being passive in face of adversity, but on the contrary, humble people do not just remain passive in face of adversity, but they can fiercely oppose it. Also, sometimes humility is perceived as not standing up for oneself, but humility is not opposed to standing up for oneself. Humble people do not put themselves above others, but they also do not have to allow others to disrespect them. Similarly, humility is not insecurity but humble people are aware of their strengths and their dignity. It is also not lacking self-confidence but feeling at ease with one's strengths and limitations. Finally, humility is not false modesty since humble people do not falsely negate their strengths, but they acknowledge them to the right degree (i.e. not overemphasizing them, not negating or diminishing them).
7. What are habits of excellence?
8. What is humility?
9. What is creativity?
10. What is solidarity?
11. What is the mission?
12. a, b, d
13. a, b
14. a, d
15. a, c, d
16. b
17. a, d
18. a, d