

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 the concept of a purpose.
2. Recognize the purpose behind actions in their life.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Three Essential Questions Table + Answer Key
- Iceberg of Personal Excellence Worksheet
- HDC Envelope
- Interim Quiz 2 Worksheet + Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- Purpose: a reason why we do something
- Heroism: possessing habits of excellence

PROCEDURE

Step 1: Review the previous lesson. Highlight some of the things that constitute heroism, recall the definition of heroism and Ernest Shackleton as an example of someone who embodied heroic perseverance.

Step 2: Explain that for each action a person takes, it's important to have a reason or purpose as to why we do what we do. In order to persevere in a goal, we have to really want to achieve that goal. In figuring out the reason or purpose behind our actions, we can start by asking three essential questions with regard to that action. These questions are: what, how and why? The "what" is often the easiest. If someone asks, "What are you doing right now?" the answer might be "I am studying" or "I am cooking dinner."

The question “how” can be more difficult to answer but provides the explanation of what steps are necessary to accomplish a task or goal. For example, if someone asks, “How did you bake this delicious cake?!” The person who made the cake might explain their process, where they got the ingredients, the measuring and mixing tools required, the temperature of the oven, etc.

Finally, the question “why” is the most important question. By asking the question “why”, one gets to the reason behind an action, behavior, event, etc. Answering the question “why” does not explain the process but explains the **purpose** behind the action. For example, if someone asks “Why did you bake a cake?” the person will explain their motivation by saying something like “because I wanted to show love to my family” or “because I wanted to make someone happy on their birthday.” The purpose or “why” we do something gives meaning to our actions. Reminding yourself of the “why” you are doing something can help you remain motivated to pursue excellence in your life.

To better distinguish between what, how and why questions, give students the [Three Essential Questions Table](#). After students finish the worksheet, lead the class discussion on the basis of the Answer key.

Step 3: Write the definition of purpose on the board:

Purpose: a reason why we do something

Ask the students why knowing the purpose of one’s actions is important. After listening to the students’ comments, explain that knowing the purpose provides us with the reason why we should do something or stop doing something.

When we think of an iceberg, we think of a massive piece of ice floating on the water, right? But did you know that more than 80% of the iceberg is actually hidden under the water? That means that what we see is just a small percentage of the real scale of the iceberg. Most of the iceberg is hidden beneath the water’s surface. The same can be said of every person’s life.

For example, when we see an Olympic gold medal swimmer, we think, “I want to win a gold medal.” But we don’t see the years of work and struggle that go into getting there. We don’t see how many mornings that person had to wake up at 5am to get to swim practice when they wanted to sleep in. We don’t see how many hours of homework they had to do in the car on the weekend while traveling to swim meets and competitions. We definitely don’t look at a gold medal swimmer and think about how many competitions they lost ...and how hard it must have been to persevere and keep going.

To pursue personal excellence in our lives, we need to think about the person we want to become (the visible part of the iceberg) and how we are going to get there (what are the habits of excellence that we need to develop - the 80% beneath the surface?)

In the last lesson we learned about Ernest Shackleton as somebody who embodied heroic perseverance. When Ernest Shackleton was interviewing crew for his ship, do you know what he asked? He asked questions like “Can you sing?” and “Do you have a good temper?” He rejected expert polar explorers and picked people who could boost morale. He knew that it was important for people to embody different habits of excellence. Not everyone needed to be an expert navigator but everybody needed to embody habits of personal excellence.

Step 4: Hand out the [Iceberg of Personal Excellence](#) worksheet. Have students identify a hero or person of excellence in their life. Write down their name in the top corner of the page. Then, write the main role or roles that define this person, e.g., parent, lawyer, coach, teacher, athlete, doctor, etc. Then, below the visible surface, write down the qualities or hidden personal habits of excellence that this person embodies. e.g. “My Dad always shows up to my games, my Grandma drives me to school every day, my coach encourages and challenges me, the teacher is patient when I’m struggling to learn, etc.”

Once students have completed their worksheet, hand out the [HDC Envelope*](#)

*should be printed double-sided

Instructions for creating the [HDC Envelope](#):

1. Cut carefully along the dotted line.
2. Fold the paper on the blue lines so the folds go inward.
3. Glue or tape the sides of the envelope to keep your envelope together.

Fold and insert the Iceberg of Personal Excellence page into the HDC Envelope. If the heroic person the student has identified lives far away, you can help students address their letter to that person and mail it. Or, if the hero is local, encourage students to deliver their letters in-person.

Step 5: Summarize. Recall the importance of reflecting on the purpose of everything that we do. Remind students that to pursue personal excellence in life, we need to consider the hidden habits of excellence (the 80% of the iceberg beneath the surface) that will help us in persevering towards our goals.

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.

THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TABLE

Write down your responses to fill in the table below

WHAT?	HOW?	WHY?
Becoming a better friend		
Pursuing excellence in my daily life		
Showing gratitude to others		

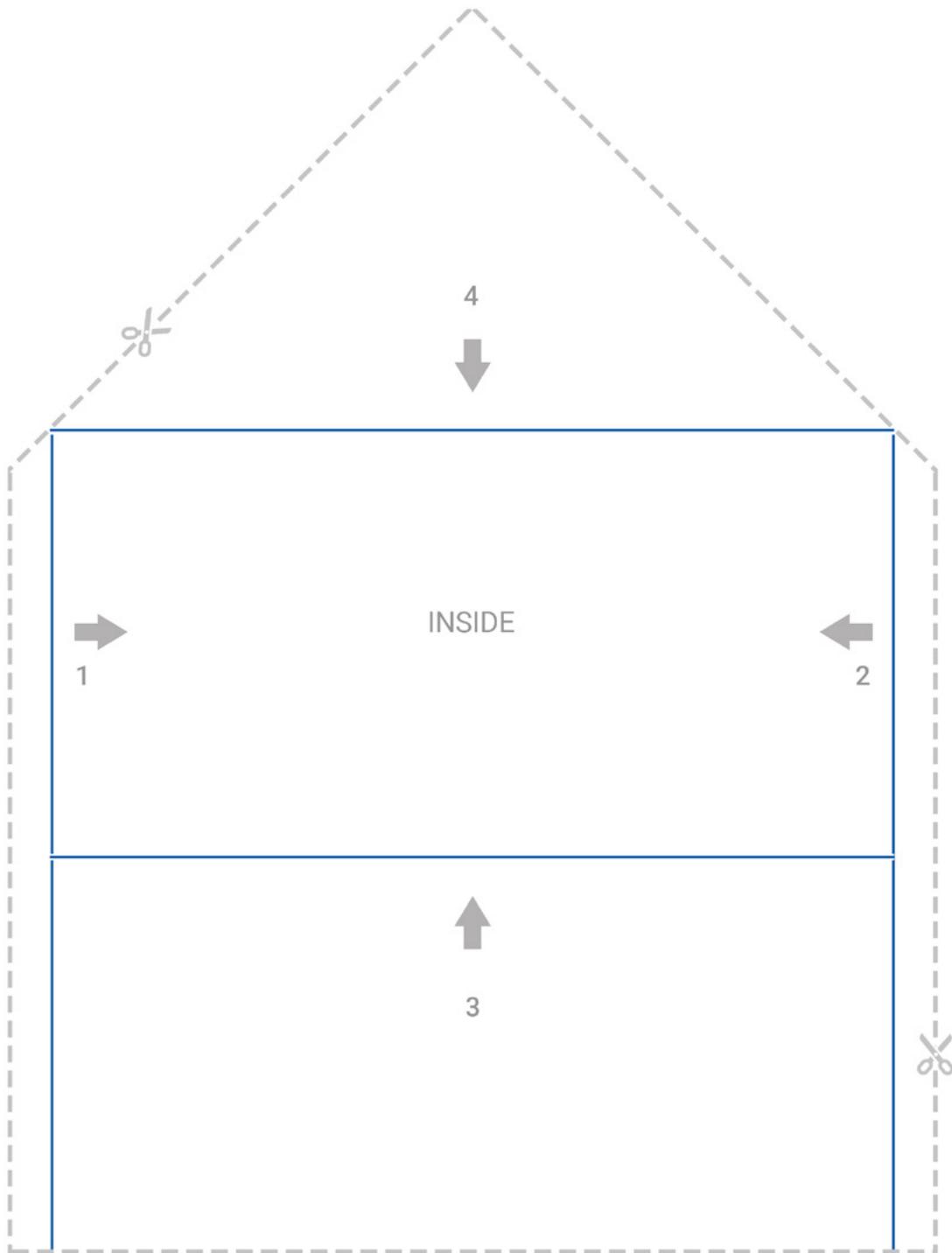
Three Essential Questions Table – Answer Key

Possible answers to each of the three questions

WHAT?	HOW?	WHY?
Becoming a better friend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Listen to others even when you don't feel like it » Welcome others to join if they need a friend » Choose to engage in activities that respect human dignity 	<p>Because it helps your friend and a friendship of excellence will bring you more fulfillment than a non-excellent friendship.</p> <p>Because every person has value and to be a good friend is to respect the human dignity of yourself and others.</p> <p>To achieve friendships of excellence and develop your unique talents.</p>
Pursuing excellence in my daily life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Listen to the teacher / my coach in order to learn from them » Ask for extra help or go to tutoring 	<p>To respect the human dignity of the teacher / coach and not distract others from being able to learn.</p> <p>To respect myself by developing myself as a student.</p> <p>To develop perseverance in learning a subject even when it's boring or challenging.</p>
Showing gratitude to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Write a thank you note to a family member » Say "thank you" to someone when they help me 	<p>To make that person happy and let them know that I care about them.</p> <p>To let that person know that they have value, too.</p>



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Human
Dignity
Curriculum



INTERIM QUIZ 2**A. True/false questions**

1. T/F Creativity is the power which animals and humans share.
2. T/F Habits of excellence are genetically inherited.
3. T/F True friends pursue excellence for themselves and others.
4. T/F Some people are born heroes.
5. T/F All human beings have purpose in life.

B. Essay questions

6. How would you describe a friendship of excellence?

C. For each answer, make a correct question

*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 gel dentifrice used in conjunction with a toothbrush to help clean and maintain the aesthetics and health of teeth," the correct question is "What is toothpaste?"*

7. Behaviors acquired through regular practice which make it easier to do something.
8. Persistence in pursuing excellence despite difficulty or delay.
9. Using one's imagination and ideas to shape the world.
10. A reason why we do something.

D. Multiple choice questions. There can be more than one correct answer.

11. Ernest Shackleton led the expedition to:
- a) The Moon
 - b) India
 - c) The Antarctic
 - d) The Amazon
12. Not one of the three essential questions:
- a) Are you kidding?
 - b) What?
 - c) Why?
 - d) How?
13. Which of the following applies to friendship of excellence?
- a) It is hard to achieve
 - b) It helps people achieve great things together.
 - c) It involves always doing what my friends want.
 - d) It involves treating some people as objects.
14. When we persist in pursuing excellence despite difficulty or delay, that is called:
- a) Humility
 - b) Perseverance
 - c) Insistence
 - d) Helplessness
15. Heroism involves:
- a) Sacrificing for others
 - b) Being born exceptional
 - c) Never making mistakes
 - d) Embodying different habits of excellence

Answer Key:

1. F – only humans have this power.
2. F – they are acquired through practice and learning.
3. T
4. F – heroes are not born, but heroism needs to be developed through practice.
5. T
6. Friendship of excellence happens when friends are pursuing excellence for themselves and the other. In it we always respect the dignity of the other, and do not merely use them for our advantage or pleasure. While friendship definitely involves having a good time together, making jokes and doing fun activities, it must also be directed to what is most excellent. A friend should always help the other person to become better and to finally, become the best versions of themselves. This sometimes involves politely telling a friend when they do something wrong or hurtful, or not participating in an activity that is not good or may be harmful to others. Examples can include telling a friend if he is not behaving nicely to others, refusing to take part in a prank that could hurt someone or discouraging a friend from skipping class.
7. What are habits?
8. What is perseverance?
9. What is creativity?
10. What is the purpose?
11. c)
12. a)
13. a) and b)
14. b)
15. a) and d)