



Class Lessons - The Heroes Club Heroes-Focused Character Education Class

Purpose:

This class will provide students with a better understanding of the impact that real American heroes have had and how their actions with specific virtues helped them overcome their challenges and to make great accomplishments.

Duration:

The class covers all 25 heroes. There is one introduction class and one conclusion class. The number of classes in between depends on how many heroes you plan to cover and how many heroes you will cover per week. The following table indicates possible class durations.

Heroes per week	$\frac{1}{27}$	$\frac{2^*}{14}$	$\frac{3^*}{10}$	$\frac{4^*}{8}$	$\frac{5}{7}$
Weeks, total					

* last week covers 1 extra hero

Objective:

- The students will learn about the lives and accomplishments of 25 great men and women in American history.
- The students will learn how these heroes undertook actions to overcome the challenges that others faced.
- The students will learn how these men and women used a virtue to accomplish extraordinary social changes and to have a positive impact on others.
- The students will understand the concept of a virtue and how acting with virtue is possible.

Materials:

- The Heroes Club Trading Cards – Real American Heroes
- The Heroes Club Workbook
- Book: 50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet
- Larger-than-life Trading Card Visual Aids (*optional*)

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- Using Trading Cards In Class Work

Additional Instructions / Recommendations

- List of Heroes or List of Heroes & Virtues

Instructional Procedures:

General comments

- You may modify any portion of this class lesson to meet your students and education needs as long as you follow the examples given on the trading cards.
- You can expand the discussions to include other heroes but should only do so after the core 25 are fully explored.
- You may want to discuss current events as they are related to the accomplishments of these heroes. You can highlight how life is today because of the changes that were made or you can describe how we are still undergoing changes.
- Each class session, below, is described with a review portion, a new instruction portion, and an assignment portion.
- Having an assignment is highly recommended as a way to deepen the learning, to involve the parents, and to build responsibility in each student for “earning” the recognitions (cards) available.

First Class Session (Introduction)

Review - none

New Instruction

- Introduce the class and the lessons, the homework, the trading cards, and the recognition style that you will use.
- Give the students their notebooks and go over the contents and uses.
- Discuss the definition of what it means to be a hero.
 1. a man or woman of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities.
 2. a person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal: He was a local hero when he saved the drowning child.
- Introduce the concept that people can be called heroes and actions can be called heroic.
- Contrast the aspect of “hero” that pertains to real-life people versus fictional and fantasy characters. (Emphasize that “real-life” heroes are like you and me – that we can do the same and better than they did.)
- Ask the class to name some real heroes they have heard of. Perhaps, ask the class to talk about different kinds of heroes (i.e. war heroes, heroes who rescue people / animals, etc.)

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- Read the list of 25 heroes and ask how many have heard of them as you read each name.
- Ask the class how many of these “Real American Heroes” had parents. How many had friends and neighbors, or brothers and sisters? How many went to school or were taught when they were young? (The answers are ALL of them – just like you and me.)
- Introduce the concept of virtues. Explain that each hero that you will study will have one virtue identified and that the students will learn how that virtue aided the heroes in their heroic actions.
**** It may be helpful to explain that all the heroes acted with many virtues, we are choosing only one here. Also, the accomplishments of these heroes included the work of many people; the hero provided the inspiration and leadership. ****
- If you have them, give the students the 2 "extra cards" for their notebook. One is a list of the heroes and virtues. One is a hero nomination card.

Assignment

- Identify which heroes will be covered in the next class. If they don't have them already, distribute the worksheets for those heroes.
- If you choose, you may assign additional work requiring further research into the facts about the hero and his / her life. Such assignments may include:
 - What was the hero's childhood like?
 - What did the hero study in school?
 - What was his/her profession / work?
 - Whom did he/she work with (either individuals, groups, or organizations)?
 - Who influenced the heroes, causing them to have the strength, knowledge, and skills they needed?
 - Where did he/she live and how was that important?
 - Who learned from the hero(es) and continued their or similar work?
- Clarify the assignments for them to complete.
Note - if you are covering more than one hero per week, you may allow the students to choose only one to do as homework or require them to complete them all.

Middle Class Sessions (Learning about the heroes)

Review

- If the worksheets from the assignment were to be filled out, collect them.
- Review the answers on the worksheets. In the answers look for understanding of life in the times of the hero, important details about the challenges faced, and direct facts about the hero's life.
- Review the answers to additional assignments.
- Ask someone to share his/her answer to the question.

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- Recognize the students for their work - give the trading cards for each assigned value to the students that achieved their goals (ask them to put the cards aside during the class session)
- Mark the progress chart for who has received which cards.

New Instruction

- Write the new heroes for this class session on the board.
- Chose one of these heroes, and...
 - Identify who the hero is, when he/she lived, and where honorary title they have.
 - Read the story of the hero from 50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet.
 - For focus and summary, read the information on the trading card, including the definition of the virtue on the card but not the Call To Action (in blue box)
 - Discuss the situation and how the virtue applied
 - Discuss something that is happening in the world today as a result of the hero's actions. Discuss how this is better for people or discuss what still can be done.
 - Read the Call To Action – and discuss in the framework of the students' lives. If the students want, talk about other actions that come from this virtue (aka choose your own Call To Action and discuss it)
- Repeat for all the heroes for this class session.

Assignment

- Identify which heroes will be covered in the next class. If they don't have them already, distribute the worksheets for those virtues. Repeat, if appropriate, the additional work to be done. Clarify the assignments for them to complete.

Last Class Session (Conclusion and Recognition)

Review

- Complete the collection/review of the homework and the recognition as done in prior class sessions

New Instruction

- Open the discussion for any lessons learned during the classes. Ask for the students to identify their favorite heroes and explain why.
- Ask the class to identify other famous heroes (specifically other Real American Heroes). For each, talk about the hero's challenge, his/her accomplishment, what virtue or virtues were apparent, and how the students can make similar choices / do similar actions.
- Ask the students if anyone has someone they personally know who they would call a hero, what that person has done, what virtue they applied.

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- Review what a virtue is and who/when we can apply them
- Ask if anyone can name some other virtues. If not, mention some of the other virtues and ask if the students have heard of them.

(A sample list is below, with Real American Heroes virtues in **bold**)

Acceptance	Foresight	Patience
Altruism	Forgiveness	Peacefulness
Appreciation	Fortitude	Perfection
Assertiveness	Freedom	Perseverance
Autonomy	Free Will	Piety
Awareness	Friendship	Potential
Balance	Generosity	Prudence
Benevolence	Happiness	Purity
Charity	Helpfulness	Purposefulness
Chastity	Honesty	Reliability
Cleanliness	Honor	Respectfulness
Commitment	Hopefulness	Responsibility
Compassion	Hospitality	Restraint
Confidence	Humility	Sacrifice
Consciousness	Humor	Self-awareness
Consideration	Idealism	Self-discipline
Continenence	Imagination	Self-esteem
Co-operation	Impartiality	Self-reliance
Courage	Independence	Self-respect
Courteousness	Innocence	Sensitivity
Creativity	Integrity	Service
Critical Thinking	Intuition	Sharing
Cunning	Inventiveness	Sincerity
Curiosity	Joy	Spirituality
Dependability	Justice	Steadfastness
Detachment	Kindness	Sympathy
Determination	Love	Tactfulness
Diligence	Loyalty	Temperance
Discipline	Mercy	Thankfulness
Empathy	Moderation	Tolerance
Endurance	Manners	Trustworthiness
Enthusiasm	Modesty	Truth
Excellence	Morality	Truthfulness
Fairness	Nonviolence	Understanding
Faith	Nurturing	Unselfishness
Fidelity	Obedience	Wisdom
Flexibility	Openness	Wonder
Focus	Optimism	

- Remind the students that they are heroes when they act with virtue

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- Give the students their The Heroes Club certificate or display them for others to see.

Assessment:

The students are assessed in each class with the homework assignments, possibly including the completion of the worksheets and/or additional work. The students may be assessed on class participation. The students should have developed skills in researching facts about the lives of heroes and analyzing them in terms of challenges, acts with virtue, accomplishments, and impacts on the lives of others. The students should be able to describe situations in their own lives and apply one or more virtue to the options available to them.

Bibliographic References:

- 50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet, by Dr. Dennis Denenberg and Lorraine Roscoe
- The Heroes Club website: <http://www.TheHeroesClub.org>