

Lesson Plan: Introductory Lesson

Procedures:

1. In a large group discussion, introduce the concept of “hero” to the class. Inform students that there are many heroes in our everyday lives, as well as in the stories we read and the movies we watch. Ask students to participate in the discussion by identifying people from their lives, books, current events, or movies that they feel can be classified as “heroes.”
2. Ask students if heroes must be famous people, or if an “ordinary person” would qualify. If students appear confused or challenged by this question, the teacher may want to share an example from personal experience in which an ordinary individual appeared heroic.
3. Ask students to identify, in their minds, a person they consider to be a hero. Using the following questions, ask students to respond by demonstrating a “thumbs up” response if the answer to the question is yes, and a “thumbs down” response if the answer to the question is no.
 - Is the hero you identified someone who shows courage when facing dangerous or difficult tasks?
 - Is the hero you identified someone who demonstrates responsibility for doing the right thing and for helping others?
 - Is the hero someone who demonstrates respect for other people and their cultures?
 - Is the hero someone who stands up for the freedom of others?
 - Is the hero someone who promotes justice and fairness?
 - Does the hero continue to advocate and help others even when the task is difficult?

*NOTE: These questions introduce the six themes of Courage, Responsibility, Respect, Citizenship, Justice and Fairness, and Perseverance, presented in **Creating Character**.*

4. Briefly discuss the responses of the students and ask them to identify three adjectives that describe their hero’s character. As students share these adjectives with the class, quickly write these adjectives on the chalkboard or overhead projector. Keep these adjectives on the board during the introductory testimony clip.
5. Ask the class the following questions:
 - Is a person a hero because of the things he or she does or because of who he or she is?
 - Can anyone be a hero?
 - Can each of us be a hero?

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6. Explain to the class that, through a series of engaging activities focusing on visual history testimony from survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust, they will explore the characteristics of Courage, Responsibility, Respect, Citizenship, Justice and Fairness, and Perseverance.
7. Play testimony clips: *Testimony - Introductory Lesson*.
8. After viewing this clip, briefly ask students to respond to the following questions:
 - Who were Elena Nightingale's heroes?
 - Were they ordinary people or superheroes?
 - How would you describe her heroes? Which adjectives listed on the board would you use to describe her heroes?
 - Do you agree with her choices of heroes? Why or why not?