



Instructor Guide

Unit 2: Lesson 4 Everyday Heroism

Objectives:

- The learner will be able to evaluate examples of heroism.
- The learner will be able to determine heroic or positive actions they can take in their own life to try to improve conditions in their community or the wider world, by focusing on a single issue, problem, or population in need.

Time Needed: It is flexible. You can choose to do everything in this guide, or you might select just a few parts to do with the kids each day.

Materials, depending on which activities you choose:

- Whiteboard or screen on which to project videos
- For visual art activity, provide materials to make greeting cards and drawings:
 - Construction paper, card stock, glue, doilies, markers, stickers, sequins, etc.
- *2-4-5 Article on 8-year-old helping hungry kids in his community* - 1 copy per student or 1 copy for teacher to read aloud
- One large sheet of posterboard and Post-it Notes in various colors for Community Needs Posterboard
- *2-4-6 Voting Cards for Community Service Group Project*. Print and cut out enough for each child to have a voting card.
- *2-4-7 Draw a Problem in your Community* handout – 1 per student
- *2-4-8 Draw a Solution in your Community* handout – 1 per student
- *2-4-9 Community Service Project Planning Sheet* – 1 for instructor
- A copy of the following picture books to read aloud:
 - [Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña](#)
 - [Marvelous Cornelious: Hurricane Katrina and the Spirit of New Orleans by Phil Bildner](#)
 - [Lend a Hand: Poems about Giving by John Frank](#)
 - [Have You Filled a Bucket Today by Carol McCloud](#)
- A copy of *2-4-4 Sharing Circle Script for Everyday Heroism*

Fundamental Skill(s) or Competencies: Responsible decision-making, Ethical responsibility, Self-efficacy

Part One: Watch Video on Everyday Heroism

Start by watching the ***Everyday Heroism Video for Kids***. If kids have trouble focusing, invite them to do 25 jumping jacks or another burst of intense physical activity for one minute before you start the video. After watching the video, you can move into Part Two below.

Part Two: Discussions about Everyday Heroism

Lesson Essential Questions: How can children and teenagers take steps to help improve the conditions of their own community or other communities in need?

- This week's lesson is very action-oriented and will include a project that can be a one-time event or could be an ongoing effort in the community over the course of many days or weeks.

Introduction:

- Tell kids, "It is easy to think that only people with superpowers can help make the world a better place, but the small acts of kindness done by ordinary people are what change the world."
- Ask: "What sorts of things can we do to improve our community that don't require us to have superpowers?"

Part Three: Activity Options

*For a one-page brief summary of quick activity options, please see *2-4-3 Quick Guide to Breakout Activity Options for Everyday Heroism*.

Activity Option 1: Read and discuss article about 8-year-old hero. Students will read the *2-4-5 Article on 8-year-old helping hungry kids in his community*, or the instructor may read the article aloud to the class. After reading the article aloud:

- Ask kids, "What do you think about how William Winslow put his plan to feed the hungry into action?"
- Why do people need to make a plan for how to enact an idea instead of just starting the project that instant?

Activity Option 2: Community Needs Posterboard: Brainstorm as a group a list of causes and issues, and communities in need.

- As kids come up with ideas, invite them to write their ideas on post-it notes and stick them on a large piece of posterboard that will show all the ideas.
- Children may choose to focus on **issues** (such as hunger, depression, racism, bullying, etc.).
- Children may also choose to focus on **communities in need** (such as the elderly who are experiencing health problems, people seeking political asylum, people who are targets of racism and hatred, homeless people, etc.)
- After the brainstorming session, review the issues and communities in need that are displayed on the posterboard, and ask children to share their feelings about this activity.

Activity Option 3: Draw a Problem in Your Community:

- Give each child a copy of the handout labeled *2-4-7 Draw a Problem in Your Community*. Provide markers or crayons and ask each child to draw a picture of a problem or an issue that they care about.
- After the children draw the pictures, hold a group discussion where each child has the option to share what they drew and why they care about that issue.

Activity Option 4: Draw a Solution to a Problem in Your Community:

- Give each child a copy of the handout labeled *2-4-8 Draw a Solution to a Problem in Your Community*. Provide markers or crayons and ask each child to draw a picture of solution to a problem they care about.
- After the children draw the pictures, hold a group discussion where each child has the option to share what they drew and why they chose that solution.

Activity Option 5: Hold an election and vote on an issue or a community in need that your group of kids want to help by doing an everyday heroism project:

- The worksheet called *2-4-6 Voting Cards for Community Service Group Project* is a template that includes six voting cards per sheet. Print as many as you need and cut out the cards. Hand a voting card to each child.
- Have each child write down one cause or issue they want to choose for the group heroism project. Have older children help primary children write down the issue they want to vote for.
- Collect the cards. Tally them up using a whiteboard to keep track. The cause with the most votes will be the focus of your group project. If there is a tie, you can hold a run-off election. Depending on your resources, time, and capabilities, you could also choose to do more than one project or support more than one cause.

Activity Option 6: As a group, plan how you want to act as everyday heroes to improve the issue or the cause that was the winner of your election:

- The instructor will lead children through the planning items in the worksheet *2-4-9 Community Service Project Planning Sheet* and will record the ideas and plans that the children want to enact.
- This will be your group's strategic plan.
- Over the next few days, weeks, or months, your group will implement your plan.
- Remember, there are many ways to be everyday heroes. Some ideas include: hold a food drive, plan a bake sale and donate the proceeds to your cause, organize volunteers to help out at a pet shelter or organize a visit to a nursing home, make posters for an awareness campaign, create a PSA to upload onto YouTube and share with your community, start a mentoring program, write letters or postcards to legislators, collect toys for a homeless shelter, etc.

Activity Option 7: Hold a full group Sharing Circle to discuss Everyday Heroism

- Please use the complete guided script for facilitators labeled *2-4-4 Sharing Circle Script on Everyday Heroism*. Allow 20-35 minutes for this activity, depending on how many rounds you complete and how large the circle is.

Activity Option 8: Read picture books aloud. We recommend the following books that embody the themes of this lesson plan. After reading each book aloud, ask the children how it relates to everyday acts of heroism. Children may draw pictures of the story as they listen or afterwards.

- [Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña](#)
- [Marvelous Cornelious: Hurricane Katrina and the Spirit of New Orleans by Phil Bildner](#)
- [Lend a Hand: Poems about Giving by John Frank](#)
- [Have You Filled a Bucket Today by Carol McCloud](#)

Activity Option 9: Physical activity: Community-building games

1. *Stone Soup*: Send each child outside to find ingredients (pieces of grass, rocks, feathers, leaves, etc.) for an imaginary soup that will feed the community. Have kids pretend to build a fire and stir the soup as it cooks. Each kid will announce what type of “vegetable” they are adding into the pot. Then pretend to have a group meal.
2. *Jump the Creek*: Lay out two long ropes about a foot apart. Divide the children into two teams placed at opposite ends of the play area. On your signal, the two teams run and try to jump the ropes. Keep on widening the ropes each time. If the students land in the creek, they must dry their feet (lie on their back and shake their legs) before continuing.
3. *Tangled Up*: Sort the children into groups of up to 12 people. Have each child take one hand and grab the hand of anyone in the group except the people standing next to them. They then take their other hand and grab the hand of anyone in the group except the people standing next to them and the person they are already holding hands with. The challenge is to get untangled without letting go of each other’s hands and emphasizes that getting untangled requires a lot of communication and cooperation.

Activity Option 10: Drama/Theater activity: Invite kids to form groups and create a skit about this week’s theme, which is *Everyday Heroism*. Below are prompts:

- “You and your friends get to replace the Mayor of your town for one week. Make a skit about the social issues facing your town that you are going to try to improve. How will you make positive changes? By passing new laws? Raising money? Holding rallies? Show us how you will enact your plan.”
- “You can either receive a million dollars to spend on a social cause OR you can receive 1,000 volunteers to mobilize on a social cause. Have half the group advocate for how the money is better and have the other half of the group advocate for the volunteers.”

Activity Option 11: Visual Art activity: Each child will make cards and messages of support that will be delivered to members of the local community that are living in nursing homes, shelters, or hospitals.

- Work with the kids to identify several different populations that will be receiving cards and messages. All week, make cards and drawings. Supplies can include cardstock, construction paper, glue, stickers, markers, cut-out hearts, doilies, stamps, crayons, etc.
- Provide kids with sample messages such as: “We care about you!” “We love you!” “We are thinking about you!” “We are standing with you!” When finished, deliver the finished cards to the chosen destinations or send them in a big mailing envelope or box.

Accommodations/Modifications:

Teachers may help students to devise very simple plans, adjusting the writing and content requirements to suit students’ abilities. Students should also be allowed to explain their action plans orally based on any notes they have taken or research they have conducted. As long as students have given thought to a problem or community they would like to assist and made a concrete plan to help, they can be considered to have fulfilled the lesson objective.

Supplemental/ Extended Readings and Media:

Informational texts / media:

D. Truby, *15 Ways Students Are Changing the World*, www.weareteachers.com, October 24, 2016, <https://www.weareteachers.com/15-ways-students-changing-world/>.

Kids Can Change the World: A Middle Schooler's Guide for Turning Passion into Progress, by Adom Appiah, Triple A Press, 2017.

PBS station KQED has produced a timeline called *Too Young to Vote, Old Enough to Take Action: A Brief History of Powerful Youth-Led Movements (1903-1971)*. This timeline can help students to understand the great impact young people have had in bringing about positive social and political change.

<https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1Gb0pxJvQFamOalixYPzljrM2iCTysEkOwV3rJBbA97A>

Fictional texts:

1. *Black Lightning Year One #1* by Jen Van Meter and Cully Hammer. *Black Lightning Year One* focuses on Jefferson Pierce (Black Lightning) and his efforts to rely not only on his super powers to save his community of Southside Metropolis, but also on community activism. Jefferson becomes the principal of the local high school so as to combat the effects of gang activity at the school. The story is an excellent example of how being a hero isn't only about having superpowers. This story is for older kids.
2. *Action Comics #1*
3. *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, a series of fantasy adventure novels, by Rick Riordan, appropriate for younger kids.

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on ... topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.