

## **Hildegard Center for the Arts “Heroes Among Us”**

### **Heroes and Heroines**

Adapted with permission from Griffin Publishing, “Heroes and Heroines: The Spirit of the Olympic Games”, developed by the US Olympic Committee and Griffin Publishing

*For Grades 6-8 (but easily adapted to Grades 9-12) in the Subjects of Social Studies, Physical Education, Art, English, Music, Science, Drama*

**Purpose:** To identify the traits of positive and diverse role models who may be identified as heroes/heroines and incorporate the discussion into multi-disciplinary activities

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will consider the qualities and characteristics of heroes
- Students will identify heroes in their own life experiences or through personal research and share this information through various activities
- Students will be challenged to foster the positive and supportive characteristics of heroes in their own lives

#### **National Standards that may be met:**

- Students use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories.
- Students select and use subject matter, symbols and ideas to communicate meaning.
- Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art.
- Students describe how people’s experiences influence the development of specific artworks.
- Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to acquire new information.
- Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions.
- Students adjust their use of spoken, written and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions, media techniques, figurative language and genre to create, critique and discuss print and non-print texts.
- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate and synthesize data from a variety of sources to communicate their discoveries in ways that suite their purpose and audience.

- Students use a variety of technological and information resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes.
- Students demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.
- Students understand that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction.

### **Activities:**

- As individuals, ask students to define “Hero” and list their definition on a personal data sheet.
- Using “Discussion Questions” and “Statements to Stir Debate” ask students to list the characteristics they personally feel are present in someone labeled a “Hero” on their personal data sheet.
- Ask students to verbally share their thoughts about the definition and characteristics of a Hero and make a master list for the class to be posted in the classroom for the duration of the lesson.
- Ask students to give examples of the many groups of individuals who can be considered heroes internationally, nationally and locally (from the past as well as present day) in their respective subject matters (Physical Education, Science, etc.).
- Ask students to give examples of actions of a heroic person, especially those known to them personally.
- Ask students what they can learn from heroes in their own lives and how it will affect their future conduct.

**Student Products:** Student products will vary depending upon the subject matter and activity; however, the main focus will always be on identifying and understanding the characteristics, conduct and actions of heroes.

### **Art:**

1. Students may draw pictures, take photographs, create sculptures, or create other works of art of their choosing that portray heroes and/or their actions found in the community or on a broader spectrum.
2. Students will write up an artist statement or give an oral explanation as to why the individuals they have selected for their art pieces are heroes in their eyes.
3. Students will explain what they learn from the character and actions of their hero and why their heroes are important to them.
4. Students will complete written artist statements that describes the hero portrayed in their art as well as their creative process in producing the art.
5. A school-wide art display will show the work of the heroes depicted in the student art.

**Language Arts:**

1. Students will select someone they feel exemplifies the qualities and actions of a hero and write stories or poems involving their heroes. As an alternative, students may tell of a time in their own lives when they were heroes or when they had the opportunity to act as a hero but chose not to.
2. Students will write an original poem or legend about a hypothetical hero.
3. Students will write personal stories about a hero in their own families or community.
4. Students will read books and stories that tell of heroes and complete illustrated book reports.

**Sports:** Hold an Olympic-style sports competition.

1. Make the main focus of the competition the students' practice of good sportsmanship and exemplary behavior during the competition that would be consistent with that of a hero.
2. Award medals based on good sportsmanship and exemplary behavior as well as athletic prowess and accomplishment.
3. After reviewing the characteristics of a hero discussed in class, ask the class to list sports figures who are outstanding in their sports as well as in their personal conduct. List the characteristics and qualities they possess in and out of the sports domain that make them outstanding.
4. Ask the students to discuss the importance of good sportsmanship in and out of a sports competition and identify instances when they've witnessed good and poor sportsmanship. Ask the students to discuss the ramifications of the good and bad behavior.
5. Ask the students to place the names of the athletes into one of two columns: "Outstanding Athletes" and "Outstanding Athletes and Heroes" (in the way they conduct themselves in and out of a sports competition)."
6. Have the students write and sign a personal pledge describing how they will conduct themselves on and off the playing "field" in order to be considered a hero, good role model, and exemplary representative of their school in sporting events/activities/competitions.

**Social Studies/History:**

1. Ask students to select a hero from history and complete research about the life and actions of the individual. The teacher may narrow down the focus of this selection to a particular period in time, region or activity or may select to allow the students free reign in selecting their hero from history.
2. Ask students to prepare written and/or oral reports about the heroes they have selected.

**Drama:**

1. Ask students to write one-act plays or a dialogue that depicts heroic behavior.
2. Have the students perform their work for the class and select the best projects to be presented for the entire school at an assembly.

**Debate:**

Ask students to select a debatable premise from the list below or develop their own relevant topic within the realm of “heroes” to conduct in-class debates.

1. Can someone be considered a hero if he/she does something against the law to challenge injustice or protect others?
2. Can heroes really be heroes if only a certain group in a society calls them heroes?
3. Can someone who is noble and admirable in one aspect of his/her life but contemptible or immoral in other areas still be called a hero?
4. Must a heroic person always behave as a hero in order to be considered a hero?
5. Can the notion of what makes a person a hero change over time as societal values change?
6. Must a person possess physical strength and be courageous and brave to be considered a hero?
7. Can a person who possesses courage, intelligence, conscience and selflessness but is unwilling to act be called a hero?

**Science:**

1. Ask students to identify heroes in science who have exemplified heroism through their conduct, actions, selflessness and contributions to humanity.
2. Ask students to complete research studies of the lives of the scientific heroes they have selected and present to the class in written and/or oral form.
3. Classes could plan a follow-up “share fair” where students make models or science projects based on a given hero’s field of emphasis.

**Music:**

1. Ask students to select a hero from the music world.
2. Ask the students to prepare a written or oral report to tell why they have selected that person and share some of the music and instruments from that person’s time.
3. An alternative is to identify music compositions that tell the stories of heroes through music and prepare a concert with the theme of Heroism.
4. Encourage students to compose an original work with the theme of “Heroes”.
5. To stir debate, enter into a classroom discussion about contemporary Musicians/Performing Artists that may include the following:
  - a) How do the students differentiate between a musical “hero” and an “idol”?
  - b) Should Musicians/Performing Artists be held to a higher standard because of their status and the audience they may reach?

c) Ask students to list Musicians they consider to be “heroes” on and/or off stage and why.