



Instructor Guide

Unit 2: Lesson 2 Connecting with a Personal Hero

Objectives:

- The learner will be able to define the term “personal hero.”
- The learner will be able to identify at least one strategy to connect with their personal hero in a time of need.
- The learner will be able to identify at least one way they can benefit from having a personal hero.

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:

- *Got Heroes?* PowerPoint presentation
- Whiteboard, projector, sound
- 2-2-5 *The Importance of Heroes* article – 1 per student (optional). Teachers may opt to have students read this article before class or read aloud and discuss sections of it as time allows.
- 2-2-6 *Writing Assignment for My Personal Hero*– 1 handout per student
- 2-2-7 *Graphic Organizer for My Personal Hero* – 1 per student, optional
- Some students might want access to the internet to research their personal hero.
- 2-2-8 *Assessment for Connecting with a Personal Hero* (1 per child)
- For visual art activity, provide:
 - Posterboard, 1 per child
 - Magazines and comic books for cutting out images
 - Sheets of superhero stickers or favorite character stickers
 - Glue, markers, drawing supplies, construction paper
- A copy of the following picture books to read aloud:
 - [I Promise by LeBron James](#)
 - [Superheroes Are Everywhere by Kamala Harris](#)
 - [Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez by Kathleen Krull](#)
- A copy of 2-2-4 *Sharing Circle Script for Connecting with a Personal Hero*

Optional – The teacher may wish to compile a list of people who could be potential heroes for students. The list can include real people, from the past or present, as well as fictional characters from literature, movies, TV, and comic books.

Fundamental Skills or Competencies: Self-awareness, Self-efficacy, Self-management, Self-motivation, Emotional regulation

Part One: Watch Video on Connecting with a Personal Hero

Start by watching the *Connecting with a Personal Hero Video for Kids*. After watching the video, you can move into Part Two below.

Part Two: Discussions about Connecting with a Personal Hero

Essential Question: What is the value of having a personal hero, and how can a personal hero help us when we are struggling or uncertain? Many kids report that they do not have a positive role model to help them when they are struggling, including dealing with depression, anxiety, or stress. This lesson aims to help students understand the benefits of having a personal hero to help them feel more empowered.

Introduction:

The instructor should share a brief story about someone who is a personal hero of theirs before asking the kids to name some personal heroes.

- For example, you might say, “One of my personal heroes is Michael Jordan, because every time he missed a basket, he picked up the ball and practiced again and worked harder, and this taught me not to let my discouragement get in the way of my willingness to try again. Who are some of your personal heroes?”
- Briefly review the definition of a personal hero from the previous lesson, which is:
 - A hero is someone who makes a sacrifice or takes a risk, however small, for the sake of others.”

Teaching Kids How to Identify a Personal Hero

Key Concept One: A personal hero can be a fictional character, a real person they know, or a real person they do not know *personally* but have learned about.

- For example, it could be Warrior Princess Raya from the new Disney animated film, *Raya and the Last Dragon*. It could be your grandparent. It could be a historical figure like Martin Luther King, Jr., or it could even be a coach on your soccer team!

Key Concept Two: Our personal heroes reflect our values and the characteristics and qualities we admire.

- Note: Be sure that students understand that our “**values**” means our *beliefs about what is morally right and wrong and what is most important in life*.

Key Concept Three: Our heroes are flawed and NOT perfect; rather heroes achieve great things in spite of, and sometimes because of, the struggles they’ve experienced.

- These struggles have helped heroes to grow and to gain strength and wisdom.
- For example, some of our heroes have suffered great losses. Anna and Elsa lost their parents; Woody from *Toy Story* lost Andy when Andy grew up, etc.

Key Concept Four: Being a hero is about a person’s *character* and does not have to do with achievement or status or being widely recognized as a hero.

- A person can be a hero because they have made just one other person’s world a better place. You don’t need to be famous to be a hero.
- For example, during the coronavirus pandemic, many frontline workers were heroes who kept our society going long before vaccines were available. Can you think of some examples? If children need prompts, here are some ideas:
 - Grocery store workers
 - Bus drivers
 - Postal officers
 - First responders and healthcare professionals
 - Childcare workers

Part Three: Activity Options

*For a one-page brief summary of quick activity options, please see 2-2-3 *Quick Guide to Breakout Activity Options for Connecting with a Personal Hero*

Activity Option 1: Show students the PowerPoint presentation *Got Heroes?*

It will define the term “personal hero,” offer examples, and explain several of the benefits of having a personal hero. Suggested open-ended question to ask afterward: *Was there anything in the presentation that struck you, surprised you, or was new information for you?*

Activity Option 2: Guide students through reading and discussing *The Importance of Heroes* article.

- The article incorporates the key teaching points above and ideas in the *Got Heroes* PowerPoint, but it goes into greater detail. Teachers may opt to read aloud parts of the article to spark discussion.

Introduce the idea that students can benefit from connecting with their personal hero, particularly in times of need.

- Ask students, “Can you think of times in a person’s life when they would wish they could speak to their hero and get their advice?” Offer a couple of examples from the list below and encourage students to brainstorm other ideas.

When a person ...

- feels discouraged and needs inspiration and encouragement.
- is facing a situation and doesn’t know what action to take.
- has made a mistake or feels lost.
- is faced with making a tough choice.
- feels alone.
- feels overwhelmed.
- is faced with taking a risk to do something scary or daunting.
- needs to inspire or motivate *others* to take a risk or do something challenging.

Discuss HOW students can connect with their personal hero, particularly in a time of need.

If the hero is someone a student knows, they can seek out that person’s counsel. However, if the hero is someone they don’t know or is a fictional character, students can have an internal dialogue with their hero. They can ask questions of their hero or imagine what advice or support their hero would offer. Prompt students asking, “What would you ask your hero?” Be sure students hear the following suggestions:

- What would _____ do in this situation?
- What would _____ say to me?
- What advice would _____ give me?
- How would _____ encourage me?

Activity Option 3: Each student selects and writes about their own personal hero:

Instruct students to reflect on who they would name as a personal hero and write one to two paragraphs about that individual. (See 2-2-6 *Writing Assignment for My Personal Hero* writing assignment and 2-2-7 *Graphic Organizer for My Personal Hero*.) If needed, students should be given time to do research to select a hero and gather basic information about them. This is not meant to be a lengthy writing assignment; rather, it's an opportunity for students to reflect on a hero they have already identified, or to select one and begin a study of that individual. Please note that it is not necessary for students to fill out all sections of the graphic organizer, if they are using it.

As time allows, have students share, in small groups or with the whole class, whom they selected as a personal hero and why after they've completed the writing assignment.

*For younger children, you can talk through this activity as a group discussion rather than have them work on it as a writing assignment. You may also have younger children do this activity as a drawing assignment.

Activity Option 4: Hold a full group Sharing Circle to discuss Connecting with a Personal Hero

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

Activity Option 5: Read aloud and discuss a picture book about Connecting with a Personal Hero.

- We recommend the following books that embody the themes of this lesson plan. After reading each book aloud, ask the children how they think the story relates to connecting with a personal hero.
 - [I Promise by LeBron James](#)
 - [Superheroes Are Everywhere by Kamala Harris](#)
 - [Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez by Kathleen Krull](#)
- Children can also draw pictures of the stories as they are listening (or afterwards as a separate activity).

Activity Option 6: Physical activity: Play various physical games incorporating superhero themes.

1. Superhero Tag: Have the kids form a big circle. The tagged person stands in the middle. A superhero saves them by using their superhero powers to run, jump or fly into the circle to rescue the tagged one. The rescuer becomes the new tagged person. Repeat.
2. Hero charades: Each child gets a chance to act out a heroic everyday action, and the other students guess what the child is doing. (i.e. picking up trash, rocking a crying baby, cooking a meal, reading a book aloud to a younger child, etc.)
3. Team Tasks: Organize children into teams. They will come up with their own heroic tasks.
 - a. Each member of the team must complete a Team Task card (ex. Do ten jumping jacks, dribble the ball and make a basket, run to the cone and back twice, etc.)
 - b. Children must work together to decide which student's strengths would be best suited to each Team Tasks. Focus on the group's needs, not their individual wants.

Activity Option 7: Drama/Theater activity: Invite kids to form groups and create a skit about this week’s theme, which is Connecting with a Personal Hero. Below are prompts:

- “You are on a survival trip in the woods with your friends. You each need to come up with a job that you will do to help keep the group alive. Imagine your personal heroes are there providing advice and support. What would they say to help?”
- “There is a new child in your class who needs to pick a personal hero but has never seen any shows about heroes. Take turns describing your favorite heroes to help them learn about what it means to be a hero, and help the new child pick a hero of their own.”

Activity Option 8: Visual Art activity: Each child will make a personal hero posterboard.

- Each child will create a posterboard that represents their personal hero.
- Visual representation can be abstract or concrete, and can include found items, drawings, family photos, magazine clippings, etc., that can be pasted onto the board.
- Children can use markers to decorate, draw and write on their board.
- You can also provide sheets of superhero stickers or stickers of favorite characters.
- Each child can share their finished poster with the group, if they prefer. You can also hang them all up on a “wall of personal heroes” before eventually sending them home.

Part Four: Assessment

If you want to do a formal assessment at the end, hand out one printed copy to each child of 2-2-8 *Assessment for Connecting with a Personal Hero*. Ask the children to do the written exercise. For primary students, you can talk through this assessment as a discussion.

ANSWERS: For questions 1 and 2, accept all reasonable answers.

1. Name at least one reason why it is helpful for each of us to have a personal hero.

(Possible answers: Heroes give us hope and remind us that there are good people around we can count on to do the right thing. Heroes remind us that we can do great things even though we all have flaws and make mistakes. Heroes remind us to strive for fairness and justice. Heroes show us that difficult problems can be tackled and solved.)

2. Write at least one question you can ask yourself to help you connect with a personal hero in a time of need.

(Possible answers: What would my hero *do* in the situation I’m facing? What advice would my hero give me? What words of support would my hero offer me?)

3. Circle any statement below that is true.
(Correct answer is highlighted in bold.)

- a. For someone to be your personal hero, you need to know them in person.
- b. You can learn from a hero by reading about and studying their life story.**
- c. A personal hero must be a real person.

Common Core Standards:**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1**

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3

Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

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.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Notes:

S. LaBarge, "Heroism: Why Heroes are Important," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, January 1, 2000,

<https://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/more/resources/heroism-why-heroes-are-important/>