



HEROES

What Happened to the Firing Squad?

March 14, 2020

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Acts 1:8 (NIV) • “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.”

2 Peter 1:3 (NIV) • “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

James 1:2, 3 (NIV) • “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

1 Peter 1:13 (NIV) • “Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

John 14:12, 13 (NIV) • “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “HEROES”

Most young people are searching for role models. This is natural as they begin to prepare for adult lives outside their own families. However, for parents and teachers this search for heroes is frightening, because a hero can lead a teenager in either of two directions.

This lesson is intended to see heroes from the students' perspective without being judgmental. Criticizing a student's choice of a hero may shut you out, leaving you no room to guide and direct. Throughout this lesson the teacher should focus on helping the student identify, in heroes, characteristics worthy to emulate rather than focusing on who the heroes are. In the next lesson they will be presented with Jesus as the best hero they can have.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH “HEROES”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Understand the role of a hero.
2. Identify characteristics of a hero.
3. Let God make a hero of them.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) copies of “Bible Hero Quiz” (p. 120), pens or pencils; (Activity B) paper, pens or pencils.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Chalkboard, whiteboard, or flip-chart, art supplies.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Distribute the “Bible Hero Quiz” (p. 120) for each student to complete independently. Then read the answers out loud for the students to check. (Students will likely not know all the answers.) (1) Nehemiah; (2) Noah; (3) Rahab; (4) Daniel; (5) Barnabas; (6) Caleb; (7) Peter; (8) Esther; (9) Moses; (10) Elijah; (11) Hananiah = Shadrach, Mishael = Meshach,

Azariah = Abednego; (12) Abigail.

Debriefing • **Ask:** Why do you think you didn't know some of the answers? (They didn't have anything to do with me. I never studied about this in school. They are all from a different time or place.) **Say:** People are looked at as heroes only in the context of time, relevance, and circumstance. For example, the heroes of my time may not have any meaning to you. Everyone has many heroes to choose from. Today we will look at ways to identify the characteristics of a hero and how they affect our lives.

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Divide the class in two groups.

Get set • Have the first group pretend they are a board of trustees of a huge software company. They are looking for a new president and will compose a newspaper advertisement describing the type of person they are looking for. Have the second group pretend to be a band of angels looking for the best leader for the citizens of earth.

Go • They will compose a newspaper advertisement for the position. When they have completed the activity have each group read their advertisements out loud and compare the two.

Debriefing • **Ask:** What was the difference between the two ads? (They're completely different. They have some things in common. They would attract two very different people.) **What does this activity say about greatness in the world as compared to greatness in God's kingdom?** (God isn't impressed with worldly success. The world looks for people with power and talent, while God looks at people's hearts.) **What can this exercise show us about choosing heroes?** (Just as in looking for someone to fill a certain responsibility, the person we choose to be a hero changes depending on our needs, the context of the situation, and the circumstances.)

Say: The heroes of my time may not have any meaning to you. In every generation there are people whom others tend to admire. Today we will look at ways to identify the characteristics of a hero and how those heroes affect our lives.

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

In the late 1940s an unknown missionary named Gladys Aylward returned from China to England. Alan Burgess, who was producing a series on war heroes for the BBC radio, visited her, hoping that the missionary could tell him about heroes she had heard about in China. She told him that she didn't actually know any heroes.

"What about yourself?" he asked. "Did you have any hazardous experiences during the war?"

"I doubt people who listen to the BBC would think I've done anything interesting."

"Didn't you even come into contact with the Japanese invaders?" he pressed.

"Yes," she answered cryptically. It wouldn't be very forgiving if she told Alan Burgess the Japanese had shot her down in a field outside Tsechow. Bombed her in Yangcheng. Strafed her near Lingchuang too. Smashed her on the head once with a rifle butt. Finally, put a price on her head. "Some Japanese are very nice, you know," she volunteered.

"Apparently your life in China was rather sheltered," Mr. Burgess grunted dryly.

Gladys had to offer the poor man something. "I did take some children to an orphanage near Sian."

"You don't say," grumbled the producer, not hiding his disappointment. "Kids? To an orphanage?"

"Yes, we had to cross some mountains."

Burgess perked up. "Real mountains?"

"Yes, I believe you would call them real mountains. The journey was made more difficult because we couldn't walk on the main trails. Oh, and then we had to get across the Yellow River too."

"Isn't that the notorious river that drowns so

many that it's called 'China's Sorrow'?"

Burgess was more and more aghast as Gladys detailed her trek. His voice choked. "You ran out of food? You had no money? Just you and 100 kids—many of whom were toddlers—trekked for one month across mountains, across the Yellow River, ducking Japanese patrols and dive bombers? And at Sian you were diagnosed with typhus and pneumonia and malnutrition? Yes, Miss Aylward, I think people who listen to the BBC would think you've done something interesting."—Adapted from *www.heroesofhistory.com*. Source:

Alan Burgess, The Small Woman (1957, revised edition, 1969.)

Ask: What characteristics of a hero can you identify from this small section of Miss Aylward's life? (Humility, courage, care for others) **Whose lives do you imagine she affected besides those of the children whose lives she saved?** (Many people have heard her story.) **How might those lives have been affected?**

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Ask: What do heroes have to do with God's kingdom? (Most students will not be able to see the connection!) **Say:** When a war is over and becomes a part of history, it is connected with war heroes—people who made a difference and brought victory. You and I are also in a war. And there are worlds watching to see how this is all going to end. When this war is over, it will be a part of the history of this universe.

Ask: Who will be the heroes in this war? (Missionaries, preachers, teachers, doctors, nurses, anyone can be) **Say:** As God's children in this world, it is our duty to be the heroes of this war, to be the kind of person that others would want to follow. When you are a hero in God's kingdom, your primary responsibility is to lead others to Christ.

Ask: What are you doing to fulfill your duty as a witness for God? (I go to church, I pray, I

read my Bible occasionally, I'm a Christian—an Adventist.) **Say:** **Even more important than doing the right things that identify you as a Christian is having a close, personal, one-on-one relationship with Jesus. The more "real" Jesus becomes to you, the easier it will be to be an effective agent and soldier for God.**

Have the students find and read the verses from "The Source" in the order they are listed: **Acts 1:8; 2 Peter 1:3; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:13; John 14:12, 13.** After each verse is read, discuss what it is saying about being an agent of the kingdom.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Have students follow along in their Sabbath School lesson as you read the story, "What Happened to the Firing Squad?" (You may want to have copies for students who may not have their Sabbath School lesson with them.) Have students conjecture about how the story ended. Then **say:** **Here's the rest of the story: With tears in their eyes, they lifted their guns and fired. Neither they nor Bruce realized that they were shooting blanks. The leader then told him that he would be released and that they would never forget him. The leader also said how much they had grown to respect him. After a 12-day hike out of the jungle, this hero for God was released.**

Ask: **What would you have done in Bruce's place?** (Run for my life; I would never have gone to Colombia.) **If being in his place is too hard to imagine, how is Bruce a hero worthy to follow?** (Because he never gave up; he trusted God; he had faith; he always chose to do what God had before Him to do.)

If you have not already done so, have the students find and read the verses from "The Source" section in the order in which they are listed: **Acts 1:8; 2 Peter 1:3; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:13; John 14:12, 13.** After each verse is read, discuss what it is saying about being an agent in the kingdom.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Read the following verses together:
1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 14:12; 2 Timothy 2:22; Matthew 5:14; John 13:15; Exodus 18:21; Colossians 3:17.

Say: **Let's imagine it's a Sabbath afternoon and you are with a group of Adventist Christian friends sitting around doing nothing and being bored. Someone suggests a game—but it isn't about God or spiritual things, and it's still Sabbath. What do you do? Be honest.** (Find an excuse to leave; play the game, all the while feeling guilty; play it, what's the big deal?; explain why you are not comfortable and then leave.)

Say: **Being a hero for heaven is different from being a hero in this world. In this world you can sometimes be a hero just by having money, education, connections, and so on. But in God's kingdom being a hero often involves leaving your comfort zone. It requires you to do something you may not necessarily be comfortable with. Bruce Olsen, from your lesson, was definitely out of his comfort zone. Jonah was out of his comfort zone. Abraham was out of his comfort zone.**

Ask: **Can you think of others who were required to step out of their comfort zone in the making of a hero?**

Say: **Being part of God's kingdom may involve stepping outside of your comfort zone and doing something you may feel is embarrassing or awkward or scary.**

Ask: **What verses that we have read today make stepping outside of our comfort zones a little less frightening?** (2 Peter 1:3; Acts 1:8) **What other verses can you think of?** (Matthew 28:20)

Say: **As a child of God you have the assurance that God is with you regardless of your**

circumstances. You could be doing your everyday routine and have Him with you. Or you could be doing the most difficult thing you've ever done and still have Him with you.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Refer students to Friday's section of their lesson. Have volunteers read, or read together, the modern paraphrase of the Beatitudes.

Say: Today we've discussed some of the characteristics of a hero. We might consider the Beatitudes a list of the characteristics of a Christian hero. **Ask:** Who are some people in our church that fit this description of a hero? (Refer to Matthew 5:7-12. Answers will vary.)

Take student suggestions and list them where all can see. As a group decide on a way to recognize a specific number of these heroes of God's kingdom. You might create special bookmarks, or awards of excellence, and so on. Let the students come up with a plan and put it into effect.

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Why do people often look to heroes?
2. What are some characteristics of a hero?
3. Define the ultimate hero.
4. Do the heroes we follow affect our lives? If so, how?
5. Compare Bruce Olsen and Jonah.
6. How can you be a hero worthy of being followed closer to Jesus?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

The ability to be a hero is in all of us. **John 14:12, 13** says, "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these" (NIV). God has given His children the potential to do amazing things. There is no need to look for opportunities to do something out of the ordinary. All you have to do is live your life for God. When you live to do what He has planned for you, opportunities will come your way. Great things will happen. And whether you realize it or not, you will be a hero worthy of being followed closer to Jesus.

BIBLE HERO QUIZ

1. Who appealed to a leader and won the leader's backing to return to his homeland and help rebuild it?

2. Who was the man who trusted God and preached a message that made him unpopular among his contemporaries?

3. What woman joined God's people by saving Hebrew spies?

4. What man gladly faced lions rather than give up worshiping God?

5. Who looked past the mistakes of a man named Paul, saw his potential, and gave him a second chance at becoming the man God wanted him to be?

6. What spy, even when he was old, stepped out in faith to answer God's call?

7. What man of God, despite his failures, followed Christ—even to death on a cross?

8. Who risked her life by going before a king unsummoned and saved her people?

9. Who, after escaping slavery himself, went back and helped his people out of slavery?

10. Who went before a king and pronounced destruction on his land?

11. What three friends were willing to suffer a terrible death rather than worship an idol?

12. What woman pulled together a peace offering and saved the lives of those around her?



STUDENT LESSON

HEROES

What Happened to the Firing Squad?

March 14, 2020

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds” (Psalm 77:11, 12, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 11, Growing in Christ:** “In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. We are also called to follow Christ’s example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 82, 83

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FIRING SQUAD?

At only 19 years of age, Bruce Olson knew exactly what he was meant to do. God was calling him to become a missionary to Colombia. Despite knowing little about Colombia, Bruce courageously left his home with the faith that God had plans for him.

He began his work in Colombia with the

Motilone tribe. For 28 years he worked with these people. Through great struggles and tremendous joy, God was with him. At 47 years of age he was captured by two dozen Communist guerrillas. They accused him of being a CIA agent for the United States and a helicopter pilot who had killed thousands. He was taken to a camp deep in the jungle, where he was tortured and beaten.

But through this ordeal, Bruce’s faith remained strong. He earned the trust of his captors and taught them to read and study the Bible. Every time he was caught evangelizing, he was moved to another location. Bruce was moved 12 times, but during all that he witnessed to around 200 of his captors.

After eight months of captivity he was sentenced to be executed. Tied to a tree, he faced 18 guerrillas—some of whom he had led to Christ. He knew, however, that they would be put to death if they didn’t carry out their orders. Crying for their friend, they lifted their guns and fired.

How do you think this story ends?

(If you haven’t heard, ask your teacher. The teacher’s lesson contains the rest of the story.)

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Proverbs 14:12.
- » Suppose there is an artist whose music is very popular. Everyone you know is listening to him, and he is getting great reviews.

You listen to him, and his music is definitely something you enjoy. But the lyrics aren't anything you're sure you agree with. Because you like the music so much, however, you feel you can just listen to it and tune the words out. What are the dangers in doing so?

- » Now switch from music to people. Is it possible to pick and choose just the specific characteristics of a person (hero) that you would like to emulate? Explain.

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON GROWING IN CHRIST

- » Read Matthew 20:25-28; Matthew 25:31-46; James 1:27.
- » Jesus came to "seek and save that which was lost." He left His Father and home in heaven and came as a "missionary" to earth. He didn't come seeking comfort and looking for servants. He came to serve, help, and save. He is our example. As children of God we should be looking for opportunities to serve help others.
- » How has Jesus' example and the things He did touched your life?

- » As you look around, what types of service can you do for your family, neighborhood, school, church, and community.

- » Below are two verses that have been mixed together. Can you separate them? Hint: The first word belongs to the first verse; the second word belongs to the second verse; and each word will follow the same order. Follow this pattern to separate the verses.

But As grow you in therefore the have grace received and Christ knowledge Jesus of the our Lord Lord so and walk Savior in Jesus Him Christ

Verse 1: _____

Verse 2: _____

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read John 13:15.
- » Like many people surveyed, you may not think you have any heroes. This lesson is not meant to make you feel that if you don't have a hero, something's wrong with you!
- » Whether or not you've ever had a hero, what is important is that you see the importance of where you look and whom you look to for guidance. Whose opinions do you value? If you had to imitate someone's life, whose would it be? Do you really have what it takes within you to be completely sure that you are doing the best thing without guidance?
- » So even if you're a person who doesn't have specific heroes, it is important to be around different people who support you with their knowledge and experience.
- » Think of instances in the past six months when you relied on feedback from someone else.

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Fill in the blanks below. You can go to Biblegateway.com to look up the verses.

1. "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the _____, but the LORD looks at the _____" (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV).

2. "There is a _____ that _____ to be _____, but in the _____ it leads to _____" (Proverbs 14:12, NIV).

3. "Now _____ from youthful lusts and _____, _____ and _____, with those who call on the Lord from a _____ heart" (2 Timothy 2:22, NASB).

4. "I have set you an _____ that _____ should _____ as I have _____ for you" (John 13:15, NIV).

5. "But select _____ men from all the _____—men who fear God, _____ who _____" (Exodus 18:21 NIV).

6. "And _____ you do, whether in _____ or _____, do it _____ in the _____ of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17, NIV).

Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read Matthew 5:14.
- » Review the memory text.
- » It is important to realize that there is someone you can look to as an example. Christ is a flawless role model. There is nothing in His

character that is questionable or undesirable. And just as He sets an example for us to follow, we also should be examples for others. In other words, your role as a citizen of God's kingdom is to be a hero to someone. You may ask why anyone would consider you a hero. But think about it: you may have a little brother or sister, or a friend who looks up to you. Even an adult may see a reflection of Jesus in you. Being a hero in God's kingdom is about reflecting Jesus.

Friday APPLYING

- » Read Colossians 3:17.
- » The *Clear Word* paraphrases the Beatitudes in a way that helps us understand the qualities considered heroic in God's kingdom:

"Happiness comes from having a humble attitude. If you feel your need of God and trust Him, you have the kingdom of God within you" (Matthew 5:3).

"Happiness comes from grieving when you sin. Confess your sins and you will be forgiven and peace will spring up in your soul" (Matthew 5:4).

"Happiness comes from being submissive. When you acknowledge God as the source of life and abilities, you will feel heaven's joy. One day, people like this will fill the whole earth" (Matthew 5:5).

"Happiness comes from longing to do what is right. Those who do right will have an inner satisfaction that nothing else can give" (Matthew 5:6).

"Happiness comes from being compassionate and forgiving. People will remember your loving kindness and return the same to you" (Matthew 5:7).

“Happiness comes to those with pure hearts and motives. Such people will one day have the privilege of seeing God and talking to Him face to face” (Matthew 5:8).

“Happiness comes from being a peacemaker, for such are God’s children” (Matthew 5:9).

“Happiness even comes from being treated badly for doing what’s right. Just remember that no matter what happens, your place in heaven is secure” (Matthew 5:10).

“Strangely enough, you’ll find yourself blessed even when people insult you, persecute you and lie about you because you have accepted me” (Matthew 5:11).

» This is a description of the kind of heroes that heaven applauds. Make a list of adults in your church that fit one or more of the descriptions. Think of a way to let them know that they are heroes of God’s kingdom, and carry out your plan (e.g., Mr. Lee; thank him for the time he takes to coach soccer).

PERSON’S NAME

WAYS TO LET THE PEOPLE KNOW THEY ARE HEROES

