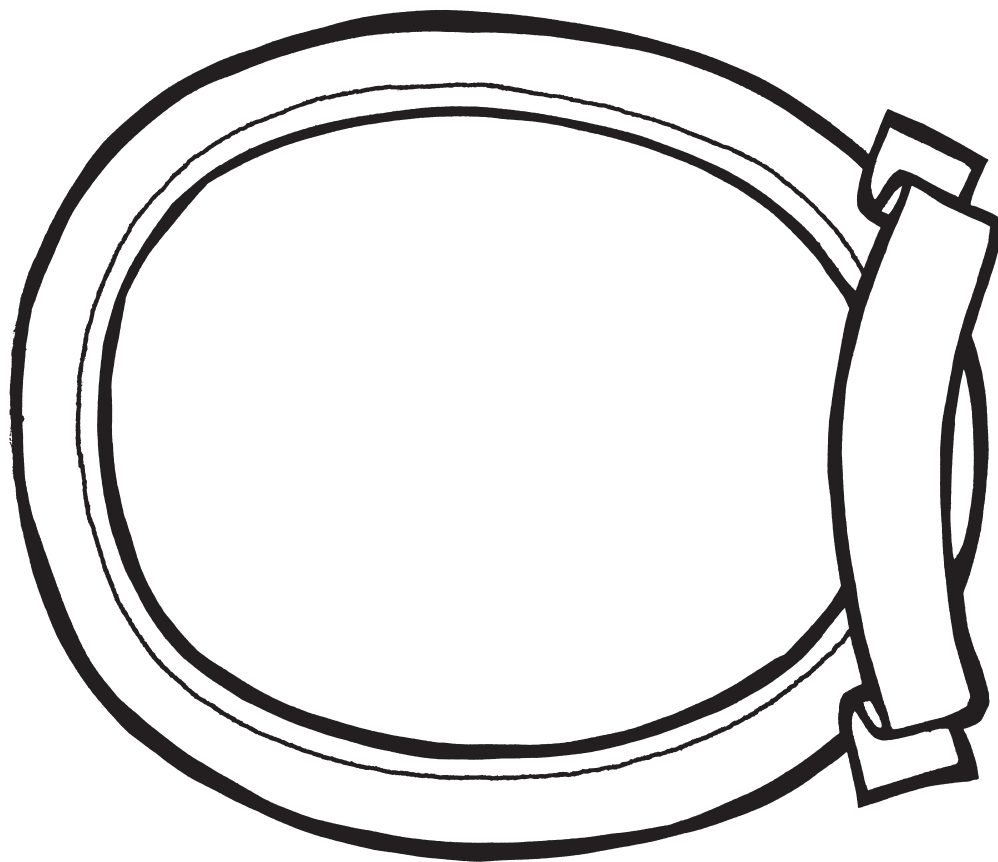


# Portrait of a Hero



Write your hero's name above.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Glue a photograph or draw a picture of your hero in the frame. Then fill in the answers below.

The reason this person is a hero to me is because

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

The three words that best describe this person:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

My hero has taught me that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



## *Hooray for Heroes!*

### **Explore the concept of heroism with cross-curricular, character-building activities**

- Children hear the word hero used today more than ever. Yet what does it mean to be a hero? Explore this concept in depth with students, then host a special day to celebrate and honor the heroes in their lives.

#### **What Is a Hero?**

Kick off your hero studies by inviting children to create dictionary entries for the word. Begin by reviewing the different parts of an entry—the word divided into syllables, pronunciation, part of speech, and definition—and having students include these components in their work. After they share what they've written with the class, record a class definition on colorful poster board for display. Encourage students to refer to this definition to help them identify heroes in their own lives, in history, and in literature, and remind them that they each may have many heroes.

#### **Hero Sandwich Booklets**

What characteristics make up a hero? Pose this question to your students, and list their responses on a chart. Then invite children to create "hero" sandwiches to identify the characteristics that they believe are most important in a hero. First, have them cut out construction paper "bread slices." Then ask each student to cut out a few construction-paper sandwich fillings (such as meat, cheese, lettuce, and tomato). Have them label each with one characteristic of a hero, using the chart you've created as a reference. Show them how to stack and staple the fillings between the bread to make booklets. Invite student to share and compare their booklets to discover that heroes can exhibit any combination of heroic qualities.

#### **Personal Heroes**

To help children recognize heroes among the familiar people in their own lives, ask them to think about family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, and so on. Do they have special admiration for any of these people? What qualities do they admire? Why? Give

children time to consider these questions, then distribute the Reproducible and encourage them to complete it.

### **Hands For Heroes Bulletin Board**

Now invite children to identify literary heroes. First, read aloud several fables, folktales, and other appropriate stories. Ask students to name the hero in each, challenging them to use the class definition that you've created to determine whether or not characters are truly heroes. Then have children trace their hands on construction paper, cut out the outlines, and label each with a favorite literary hero and his or her heroic accomplishment, as shown. As students read more stories, encourage them to create additional hands for display.

### **Hero Hallway of Fame**

Children can honor their own living and historical heroes with portraits in a class "hallway" of fame. Lead students in naming some living heroes, such as a president or other public figure; or seasonal historical heroes, such as Johnny Appleseed or the Mayflower pilgrims who set sail in September 1620. As the discussion evolves, challenge children to think of other living and historical heroes they might know. They can also gain inspiration from <http://www.rolemodel.net/>; <http://www.myhero.com/>; *The Barefoot Book of Heroic Children*, by Rebecca Hazell (Barefoot Books, 2000); *50 Great Americans Every Kid Should Know*, by Jacqueline Ball (McLanahan, 1998); and *The Children's Book of Heroes*, by William Bennett (Simon & Schuster, 1997). Next, have students create portraits of their favorite heroes using crayons, markers, colored pencils, paint, and craft items such as yarn, fabric, buttons, wallpaper, newspaper, and so on. Back the portraits with construction-paper frames, and have students title their work with the subject's name. Display the portraits under a "Hero Hallway of Fame" banner, with students taking turns as the hallway tour guide.

### **The Hero in Me**

Give students an opportunity to think about times in their own lives when they faced a challenge in order to help someone. Bring in an empty picture frame at least 8" x 10" large, and remove the glass and backing. Seat children in a circle and pass the frame around. Encourage each student to look through the frame and describe how he or she went out of the way to come to someone's aid. For example, "I was helpful when I made friends with the new kid," or "I was helpful when John fell off his bike and I brought him to the nurse." Once everyone has had a turn, have classmates describe helpful qualities about each child in the frame. Make sure each student gets a hearty round of applause!

### **Parade of Heroes**

Host a parade of heroes! To prepare, send a note home informing parents of the event, and asking each to help create a costume that represents a favorite hero. In the note, suggest ideas for story characters, historical figures, or general occupations such as nurse or firefighter. On parade day, have pairs of students interview each other to learn about the heroes that they represent, then write their interview notes on cards. Invite each child's partner to introduce the hero being represented, and to briefly name one of his or her accomplishments. For example, "Danny is dressed as George Washington. He was our first President!" Photograph each child as he or she is being introduced, then parade around the school. Later, use the photos and student interview cards to create a scrapbook.

### **Hero Celebration**

Culminate your studies with a hero celebration day. First, help students create invitations that they can present to their everyday heroes. Before the big day, guide students in making "hero" shirts using fabric crayons, as well as "hero" ribbons to give to their guests. At the celebration, ask kids to speak about their heroes and to present them each with a ribbon. Let guests browse the hero booklets, bulletin board, and scrapbook that your class has created, then lead a tour of your Hallway of Fame.