



Heroes Lesson Plan

6 Samuel Who?

Recommended Age Group: Secondary 3

Duration: 3 hours

Equipment required: none

'Self-Help' presents stories and quotes from a wide range of people who displayed the qualities Smiles wanted to inspire in readers. Smiles used examples from all walks of life because he believed anyone who achieved success in their field of work could be a role model. He believed that reading about examples of other people achieving success through good character would inspire others to do the same. Smiles also recognised that heroes were not perfect. A role model can have good and bad personal characteristics, or, not achieve something perfectly first time.

In this workshop your pupils will be encouraged to consider examples from five of the professions Smiles admired and to explore the kind of heroism these individuals displayed.

Warm Up

Movement memory (15mins)

Ask the pupils to move around the room, continually changing direction and pace to keep alert. As each of the roles below are shouted out by you, a still shape should be created to represent that role. Then on the word "move!" the shape should come to life and the pupils improvise what the walk and gestures for that role would be. Try not to give definitions to these roles prior to the exercise. Use it as a starting point to express ideas on these roles through physical movement.

- Military
- Literary
- Artist
- Reformer

After each role is acted out, have a short discussion on the movements, expressions and gestures created. Point out to the pupils that these were some of the roles Smiles wrote about when he described successful people.

Shake hands discovery (10mins)

- Get pupils to move around the classroom and take three minutes to meet and shake hands with as many other pupils as they can. They should find out if they have ever

- read a book that made them think of life differently, name that book and explain why.
- Get them to do the same thing again but this time ask: What would you like to be better at? Why?
- Come back as a class and discuss the responses. Ask for a show of hands: would pupils ever consider buying a self help book if it would help them get better at their hobby/favourite sport etc. or to achieve an ambition?

True or false (15 mins)

- This exercise allows pupils to learn about Smiles himself. Identify one end of the room as 'true', the other end as 'false' and identify the centre as 'unsure'. Read out each statement below and ask pupils to show their response by moving to the chosen location. After all the pupils have moved into position tell them if the statement is true or false.

Statements

1. Samuel Smiles had 25 books published
2. Samuel Smiles wanted to earn as much money as he could
3. He suffered a stroke and had to learn to read and write again
4. His work has been translated into 45 different languages
5. Samuel Smiles only slept two hours a day
6. Samuel Smiles is alive
7. Samuel Smiles used an iMac to write his books
8. There is a palace in Egypt with his quotes written on the walls
9. His teacher told him he would be a street sweeper

Answers

1) True 2) False 3) True 4) True 5) False 6) False 7) False 8) True 9) True

Core Activity

Smiles Heroes (1 hour)

This exercise is a chance to discover the different groups Smiles wrote about. Working in groups of four or five, groups should create an advert for a documentary on one of the characters described below in the 'Historical Heroes' section of this document. You might want to photocopy the 'Historical Heroes' section for your class to use. They can also use the website to learn about the historical heroes.

They should try to make the advert as appealing as possible for viewers to tune in and watch and should make sure they address why they think their character is a hero, using the information on the fact sheets starting on page five of this lesson plan as an inspiration.

Share work from all the groups and find out which adverts would make you want to watch the full programme and why.

Word association (15 mins)

Sitting in a circle, go around the group and ask each pupil to say the name of the first person



that pops into their head when they hear each of these descriptions:

- Self-sacrifice
- Loyalty
- Duty

After you have gone round the circle for each description, reinforce the group's understanding of this description so everyone is clear. Explain that these are qualities possessed by many of the people Smiles wrote about.

Stories alive (50 mins)

In groups of four or five create an improvisational sketch to tell a new historic tale.

Each group can choose one of the three following descriptions:

- Self sacrifice
- Loyalty
- Duty

And one of the three following locations:

- Sinking ship
- Hospital tent
- Battlefield

as inspiration to create a story and characters. Finally, get them to perform the sketch.

Endings

Discussion (10 mins)

Get pupils to think about the characters they created in the 'stories alive' activity by asking the following questions:

- Which, if any, of these devised characters may have been written about by Smiles if he was still alive?
- Would you consider any of these characters to be heroes?
- Do you believe that one person can make a difference in the world? State your rationale. Who is your hero? Is this hero a likeable person? How has this person made a difference for the better? Is there a specific event or turning point that motivated this hero to take action?

Sitting in a circle ask each pupil to end with saying who is the most memorable character from this lesson plan and why.

Potential Development

- Using the descriptions 'self-sacrifice', 'loyalty' and 'duty', ask pupils in groups of four or five to decide on an order for the descriptions and devise a modern day story inspired by them e.g duty, loyalty and self sacrifice set in McDonalds or self-sacrifice, duty and loyalty in the Big Brother house. Get groups to present their work and discuss.
- Ask your pupils to select one of the stories they have developed in the group work and write a diary page of the 'successful' character.

Historical Heroes:

Military Hero

Sir Ralph Abercromby (1734–1801), army officer, born in Menstrie, Clackmannanshire.

- Military heroes are often shown dying a heroic death in battle, Sir Ralph Abercromby did have a heroic death, but Smiles thought he was a hero for another reason.
- He was mortally wounded at the Battle of Alexandria in Egypt during the Napoleonic wars. His death was widely commemorated in poems, medals, paintings and monuments; including one in St. Paul's Cathedral, London and one in St Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh.
- The Duke of York's general orders noted of Abercromby that "His steady observance of discipline, his ever-watchful attention to the health and wants of his troops, the persevering and unconquerable spirit which marked his military career, the splendour of his actions in the field and the heroism of his death, are worthy of the imitation of all who desire, like him, a life of heroism and a death of glory."
- Samuel Smiles admired Abercromby's self-sacrifice and concern for the soldiers under his command. After he was fatally wounded he was given a soldier's blanket to ease his pain. According to Smiles he insisted that it should be returned to the soldier as even in "his dying agony the general would not deprive the private soldier of his blanket for one night."

Literary Hero

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), author, biographer, and historian, born in Ecclefechan, Annandale, Dumfriesshire.

- Smiles admired people who did not give up when things went wrong. For him this story about Thomas Carlyle was a good example of doing this.
- Carlyle was a writer and he lent the only copy of a manuscript for one of his books to his friend to read before he sent it to be published. As the weeks went by and the manuscript did not get sent back to him. Carlyle began to wonder what had happened.
- His friend admitted that he had left it on the floor in one of his rooms, the house was searched and the mystery cleared up. Though no one knows exactly what happened, it is thought that one of the maids had found it and, thinking it was rubbish, burned it on the fire!
- What was Carlyle's response? He calmly started writing the book again!
- Smiles said: "...re-writing of it a second time was one of pain and anguish almost beyond belief. That he persevered and finished the volume under such circumstances, affords an instance of determination of purpose which has seldom been surpassed."
- The day after hearing of the accident, Carlyle had to write to his publisher to explain what had happened. He was obviously upset by the accident and task of rewriting. However he was also concerned that his friend would not be blamed or feel bad

about the incident. In the letter he said:

- "Do not mention the mischance to any one: it would give great pain to some whom I love were it ever talked of; and could do no good."
- "Do not pity me; forward me rather as a runner that tho' tripped down, will not lie there, but rise and run again."

Artistic Hero

Sir David Wilkie (1785–1841), artist born in Pitlessie, Fife who painted historical subjects and portraits.

- Although he was interested in drawing from a young age, he once had to draw on a barn door because he could not afford canvas.
- He was rejected when he first applied for admission to the Scottish Academy in Edinburgh on account of the poor quality of his art work. However, he persevered at getting better until he was admitted.
- He overcame financial hardship when he was first starting out to become a reknown and successful artist in his lifetime.
- Wilkie had a lack of confidence in his ability to paint landscapes. He felt he was inexperienced but dedicated himself to improving. For ten years or so he practised painting landscapes and painted a number of successful works.
- He once related to his friend, the painter John Constable that when he studied at the Scottish Academy, his mater used to say to the students, "If you have genius, industry will improve it; if you have none, industry will supply its place." "So," said Wilkie, "I was determined to be very industrious, for I knew I had no genius."

Reforming Hero

David Livingstone (1813–1873), explorer and missionary, born in Blantyre, Lanarkshire.

- David Livingstone was a missionary and explorer in Africa who argued against slavery. He became a national hero through his own travel writings.
- From the age of ten he worked 12 hours a day in a cotton mill and after work he went to school for two hours.
- He gained a place in university to study medicine and whilst studying joined a missionary society which sent him to Africa.
- In 1851, Livingstone set off on the journey which would rank him among the greatest explorers in history. Almost four years after leaving Cape Town for the Zambezi, he arrived at Quelimane (in modern day Mozambique), in May 1856. He had travelled 5,000 miles and had included the first authenticated crossing of sub-Saharan Africa by a European. He also became the first European to see Victoria Falls in modern day Zimbabwe. It remains one of the greatest feats of land exploration in history and Livingstone returned to England to great fame. On later travels he explored the Zambezi river discovering the Zambezi Rapids and Lake Nyassa (now Lake Malawi).
- Livingstone travelled Africa as a missionary. However, he had only one short-lived



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success! He managed to convert Sechele, chief of the Kwena tribe, to Christianity. However, it was only a matter of time before Sechele reverted back to his 'pagan' ways, in particular over the issue of how many wives he could have!

- He faced many dangers from being attacked by a lion to suffering and dying from illness in Africa.
- He explored the Zambezi River in his steamship 'Ma-Robert'. The boat was damaged and he had to pay £6000 for repairs. This money was intended for his children's inheritance but he said "the children must make it up themselves".
- When speaking about his life he said "I should like to begin life again in the same lowly style, and to pass through the same hardy training."



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