

# Character Action Media

## Sam Acho – NFL Player Committed to Excellence in Football, Education and Service to Others

*This lesson has 2 parts and can be presented over 1-2 sessions. If you choose 2 sessions you can use the discussions questions, journal writing and extended activities designated by session (A) and session (B). Instructors should feel free to use whichever activities you think best for your class or group. We advise giving students the sheet with the definitions of the virtues and an overview of the story before each session.*

### Lesson Goals

Help students appreciate:

- the virtue of justice and how the desire for justice should result in a sense of duty to help and to empower others, and then to be generous in helping others
- the importance of education as a tool to help and empower others
- how we often are transformed in powerful ways by those we serve
- how our parents can help develop within us the values that are the foundation for developing a sense of mission and direction in our lives
- the fullness of gratitude in appreciating even the small benefits in our lives and the help of others, even when other aspects of our lives aren't going well
- how gratitude and hope lead to a sense of joy
- the importance of perseverance in helping us to become more resilient and our ability to recover from adversity

### Primary Virtues

- **Justice:** fair treatment, reward or punishment in accordance with our standards and /or the law. A just person works to give others the opportunity to have what they need to live with dignity and to improve their lives.
- **Perseverance:** trying hard and continuously in spite of obstacles and difficulties
- **Resilience:** the ability to recover from setbacks and adversity. A person is often resilient because they live out the virtue of perseverance.

### Secondary Virtues

- **Duty:** something that one is expected or required to do according to one's own standards, moral or legal obligation, especially as it relates to one's status as a citizen and / or member of various communities
- **Family support:** complete dedication for the well-being of other members of our family, physically, emotionally and spiritually, motivated by love
- **Generosity:** giving freely of our own possessions, time and/or talent
- **Hope:** confident expectation of achieving a goal or wish
- **Wisdom:** ability to apply knowledge, experience, understanding in ways that are effective and good. The ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting

## Leader Introduction

Each year, the National Football League awards the Walter Payton Man of the Year award to a player who exemplifies excellence both on and off the field. Each team nominates a player who it believes embodies this spirit. This year the Chicago Bears nominated Sam Acho for his work in helping provide medical care to poor villagers in Nigeria. Let's watch for what motivates Acho, a former MVP at the University of Texas, to help others in a country very far from Chicago.

**Film Clip: 2016 NFL Walter Payton Man of the Year Nominee, Sam Acho**  
<http://www.nfl.com/videos/man-of-the-year/0ap3000000744725>

## Leader Summary

Although Sam Acho and his family have given so much to the people of Nigeria, we can see how Sam has received as much, if not more. The people Acho helped have touched his life in giving him perspectives that have formed who he is as a person. We also witnessed the incredible resiliency of the people Acho has encountered in Nigeria as they persevere through poverty and a lack of even basic medical care. Acho and his family's dedication to work for justice and the good of others will hopefully inspire us to consider how we can do this in our lives.

**Discussion Question Options** (*discussion prompts / answers are in parentheses if needed*)

Before beginning our discussion let's read over the virtues and their definitions (*included within the online lesson as a separate document*).

1. Acho says, "To whom much is given, much is required. If you've been given a lot, you're required to give a lot." How has Acho lived out this quote?  
(Sam volunteers with his time in helping to provide medical care to the poor of Nigeria; he is raising money to build the Living Hope Clinic; he is raising awareness of the medical needs of the poor in Nigeria.)

What virtues are motivating Acho to help others in Nigeria?

(**Justice** in his belief that it's only fair that he has been given a lot so he should help others improve their lives; **Duty** as he is expected to help others according to his own standards and the standards of his family) (A)

2. Do you think Sam Acho's sense of duty to help others and work for justice applies to us even if we haven't been given a lot like Acho has? If yes, what are examples? (helping within our families, helping friends, joining in service projects within our communities) (A)
3. Sam Acho spoke in the interview about how he was surprised and deeply touched by the Nigerian people he was working with. What did Acho learn and what new perspectives did he gain from these people?  
(their sense of **gratitude, joy and hope** even while living in very difficult conditions; their **perseverance and resilience** in walking for days and sleeping on the floor for days to receive medical care) (A)

4. Why do think the people Acho served and worked with in Nigeria have such a strong sense of gratitude, joy and hope, even though they live in very difficult conditions?  
(when we don't have many possessions we can appreciate more what we do have and the opportunity to earn; when we don't have many possessions we don't get caught up in our things and can appreciate more our relationships with other people)(A)
5. Do you think the virtues of gratitude and joy are related to each other, and if yes how? Can you give some examples of people you know who live out both gratitude and joy?(B)
6. In what areas would you like to work for greater justice and why?(B)
7. In the video, Sam discusses how his father is the "solid rock" of their family. How did his father demonstrate this to Sam and what are the key lessons that Sam's father taught him?  
(instilled in Sam the importance of giving to others at an early age; his father never missed a game; he instilled in Sam the importance of education – even above professional football; he is an effective leader in inspiring and organizing others for the medical missions trips to Nigeria)(B)
8. How did Sam show that he understood his father's advice on the importance of education? (he earned the Campbell Trophy for college football's top scholar-athlete and is using the post-graduate scholarship to earn his MBA from a top school for international business)(B)
9. How has education enabled the Acho family to help others and to work for justice?  
(Mrs. Acho is a nurse and directly provides medical care to the poor of Nigeria; Mr. Acho is a psychologist and effective leader in motivating and organizing others to help.)  
  
Do you think becoming well educated can help us to become more effective in helping others and working for justice? (B)

### Journal Writing Options

1. Take time to reflect on Sam's quote about how much is expected from people who have been given much. What gifts and talents have I been given?  
  
How can I share these with others in my community and within other communities to help others? Write about at least 2 specific ideas. (A)
2. Sam talks about how the people in Nigeria are abundantly grateful for even the simple medical care they receive. He compares this attitude to his experience in the United States where he doesn't think we have the same level of appreciation.  
  
Write out whether you agree with Acho's statement, and if yes what you can do individually and within your family and among your friends to increase our sense of gratitude. (A)

3. In many cases, situations that require us to be resilient are very difficult to handle on our own. Sometimes we need the inspiration and generosity of others to help us persevere. Write about the people (the “rocks”) in your life who encourage you to persevere. How do they do this—is it by what they do or what they say? What attitudes or virtues do these actions show? (B)
4. Write about a time you have been resilient in persevering through a difficult challenge. Please include the factors that motivated you and enabled you to persevere. (B)

### Extended Activities Option

1. Fundraiser: Go to the Living Hope Christian Ministries website (<http://www.livinghopeministries.us/>) to learn about the organization. Using what you learn, partner with other students and a member of the school staff to organize a fundraiser for Living Hope Clinic. Create a campaign name, and advertise it by designing posters and / or flyers to educate others about Living Hope Clinic.

# Character Action Media

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