

Stay Strong and Dream Big

Cubs Anthony Rizzo lives with solidarity and builds hope with children cancer patients

This lesson can be presented over 1-2 sessions. If you choose 2 sessions you can use the discussion 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 before each session.

Lesson Goals

Help students:

- appreciate the importance of hope in believing in a better future, and solidarity in having the support of others in being able to persevere through difficulties and obstacles
- consider their own sense of personal responsibility in caring for and supporting others
- develop a more complete perspective on life in seeing how relationships and caring for others is what is most important, even over fame and fortune
- see how small and even very serious obstacles and challenges in life can help us to become stronger when we persevere and do our best throughout our challenges

Primary Virtues

Solidarity – being present with others; unity from a shared common purpose and / or interest; mutual support and loyalty within a group

Hope - confident expectation of achieving a goal or wish

Generosity - giving freely of our own possessions, time and/or talent

Secondary Virtues

Discipline: training expected to produce a specific benefit, moral, mental and / or physical improvement.

Empathy: trying to understand another person's situation, entering into the feeling or spirit of others and imagining yourself in another person's situation

Family Support: complete dedication for the well-being of other members of our family - physically, emotionally and spiritually - motivated by love

Perseverance: trying hard and continuously in spite of obstacles and difficulties

Leader Introduction

Each November our nation focuses on the World Series and the competition to determine the best baseball team in America. This year Anthony Rizzo, a member of the 2016 World Series champion Chicago Cubs, three-time All-Star and Golden Gloves awardee, reminds us that even a more important honor within baseball is to receive the Roberto Clemente Award. This award is given to the player who best represents the game through his character, charitable work, and positive contribution on and off the field. The award is named after Roberto Clemente, the 15-time All-Star with the Pittsburgh Pirates who focused much of his life on helping others. Clemente died on New Year's Eve 1972 in a plane crash while attempting to deliver relief supplies to the victims of an earthquake in Nicaragua.

In the first film clip, we'll see how Rizzo became an exceptional baseball player, and we'll learn about his own battle with cancer. In the second clip we'll learn about the inspiring charitable work that Rizzo is doing to earn the 2017 Roberto Clemente Award.

Film Clips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXmXzFOctW8> (A)

Both clips below present a good overview of the charity work Rizzo and his foundation are doing. You can play one or both.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdQ2VsVGmYk> (B)

<http://rizzo44.com/> (B)

Leader Summary

Rizzo's story is an amazing example of the value of hard work and the support of others in striving to achieve our own goals, the importance of persevering through the challenges of life, and most importantly the value of giving back and living in solidarity with others in need. Rizzo also helps us to remember what's important in life. Even after winning the World Series in 2016, Rizzo said after learning that he won the 2017 Roberto Clemente Award, "It's the greatest award you can win and I will be forever appreciative of this, and this will go front and center of anything I've ever done on the baseball field."

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. What are some of the virtues that Rizzo lives out, as portrayed in the first film, that enable him to succeed as a baseball player? (Please write students' responses on the board. Some ideas are: hard work, discipline, perseverance, determination)

Do you think these same virtues influenced how Rizzo dealt with his cancer, and if yes, how?

How do you think these same virtues help Rizzo to be an effective leader in his work to help others, and could help us to become leaders in helping others? (A)

2. Rizzo states that his success wouldn't be possible without the support of others. Who is Rizzo referring to in this statement, and how have they helped him? (Primarily his family in helping him to train in his youth, inspiring him and teaching him to put others first)

Some may say that everyone isn't as lucky as Anthony Rizzo in having a supportive family and environment to grow up within. Even though this is true, do you think that some of us who may not have these advantages can still learn from Anthony Rizzo's story?

(If we lack family support we can likely find others who will help and support us within our school, among our friends or community in general. We can always commit individually to do our best with whatever situation we are in, just as Rizzo did with his cancer. We can help and support others who do not have supportive families.) (A)

3. What does solidarity mean to you and what are some ideas on how can we live out solidarity more fully among our friends, family members, school or even with people we don't know but are in need?

(Spending time with a friend, sibling or parent going through a difficult situation; spending time with others through a charity such as visiting the elderly in nursing homes; encouraging and practicing with a teammate who may not be as good as we are in a sport; donating even a small amount of money to charity that we believe in.) (B)

4. Let's share some stories about a time when you were the recipient of a meaningful act of solidarity from someone else where the other person spending time with you and encouraging you helped you and / or gave you hope. Or, tell us about a time where you did this for someone else. These stories can come from our experiences within our family, school, sports teams, or larger community. (This is also a journal writing option below) (B)

5. Do you agree with Rizzo that the degree we care about others and help others is more important than our accomplishments now and in our future work? If yes, why do you think this is the right perspective about life? (B)

6. When you look at other athletes and entertainers, who do you think is living out solidarity and generosity in a way that is inspiring to you? (This is also presented as a team project in Extended Activity Options below) (B)

Journal Writing Options

1. Write about a time when you were the recipient of a meaningful act of solidarity from someone else where the other person spending time with you and encouraging you helped you and gave you hope. Or, write about a time where you did this for someone else.

Your experience can come from within your family, school, your sports team or larger community.

2. Often events, challenges and obstacles do much to shape our character and who we are as a person. What can you say about how you have been shaped by challenges or obstacles in your life?

3. Here are a series of quotes. Select one or more and write about what it means for you, now and in the future.

“Stay strong and dream big.” From Ernie Banks and a favorite quote of Anthony Rizzo

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” Winston Churchill

“We are each other’s harvest.” Gwendolyn Brooks

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.” Pablo Picasso

(These quotes could also be written on the board and have students discuss them as a group.)

Extended Activity Options

1. One way we can focus on living out the solidarity, generosity and kindness that Anthony Rizzo and Roberto Clemente have done is to participate in World Kindness Day on Nov. 13th where we are each called to perform a random act of kindness. These acts can be as simple as holding the door open for someone else to a larger act of generosity where the receiver of the act would not have expected it.

If you are using this lesson before Nov. 13th, ask students to perform their act of kindness before or on that day, and then as a class or in small groups share what act of kindness they lived out. One option for generating discussion is to organize the class into small groups and have each person share their act. Each team then votes on its most inspiring act and presents this to the class as a whole, which then votes on which team's act of kindness is most inspiring.

If you are using this lesson after Nov. 13th, you can still discuss World Kindness Day and set a date in the near future where you will perform your acts and then enact the same team and classroom vote for the most inspiring act.

To learn more about World Kindness Day:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2017/11/03/world-kindness-day-encourages-random-acts-of-kindness-tell-us-about-your-experience/?utm_term=.b49c71e48bd0&wpisrc=nl_inspired&wpmm=1

2. Hold a fundraiser for the Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation to support their efforts to help children with cancer and their families. As Rizzo says “With your help we can knock cancer out of the park.” <http://rizzo44.com/>

Or, follow in Rizzo's example and help children in a hospital in a different way by donating toys or writing cards to let the children know you are thinking about them.

3. Organize the class into small teams and have each team come up with an athlete or entertainer who they think is inspiring in living out solidarity and generosity with others in need. Each team should then present to the class its case for why the celebrity is inspiring. Have the class as a whole then vote on which celebrity should receive the “solidarity and generosity” award. If needed, some ideas are Derek Jeter, Serena Williams, Charles Tillman, Brett Favre, Albert Pujols, Eli Manning.

Resources

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/baseball/cubs/ct-spt-cubs-anthony-rizzo-roberto-clemente-award-20171028-story.html>

<https://www.mlb.com/video/share/rizzo-on-winning-clemente-award/c-1865531983?tid=7417714>

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/oct/27/cancer-survivor-world-series-champ-rizzo-is-clemen/>

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