

Homeless to Hope

Homeless man gives from his need and creates his own second chance

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:

- understand our individual responsibility to care for others in need, even those we do not know
- appreciate the value of being generous, both in how giving to others impacts those who are receiving and those who are giving
- consider what we have to give to others, and to appreciate that no gift is too small to have meaning
- realize that we shouldn't judge others by their circumstances
- realize that in being vulnerable in need of help we can come to experience deeper truths about ourselves and others
- appreciate the importance of owning our own decisions – taking responsibility for our actions and their consequences and how this helps us to become a better person
- learn how to evaluate the consequences, positive and negative, of a proposed action or plan

Primary Virtues

Caring: to help others; a caring person lives with empathy in trying to understand another person's situation, compassion in desiring to help others, and then with generosity in acting to help

Responsibility: being accountable for our actions and their consequences, accepting and meeting the demands of our duty in life, pursuing excellence

Secondary Virtues

Hope: confident expectation of achieving a goal or wish

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

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

During the holiday season we often think of the giving and receiving of gifts. Today we are going to learn about a man who lived out the fullness of generosity and caring, and in doing so created his own amazing second chance to improve his life. Normally we watch a film clip for our story but today we will read this story from an article in the Washington Post.

Washington Post Story

(The article is presented on pages 5-7 of this guide. Instructors should feel free to read the story in whatever format you think is best for your students. Options include having each student read the story in silence, asking specific students to read various sections, or for you to read the story to your group)

Leader Summary

What an amazing story. Before looking over the sheet with the virtues that apply to this story what do you think are some of the key virtues that McClure and Bobbitt lived out in their experience together?

Now let's read over the virtues and definitions on our sheet (*included within the online lesson as a separate document*) and discuss some other aspects of this story.

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

1. Let's picture ourselves as McClure and we unexpectedly find ourselves in a neighborhood that is very dangerous and we don't know anyone. What do you think you would have thought about the homeless man, Bobbitt, as you saw him? Would you have viewed him as a potential threat?

What does the fact that Bobbitt was the one who helped McClure teach us about how we view others?

(We shouldn't judge others by their exterior circumstances, in this case homelessness. Bobbitt's actions remind us that every person has the potential to live out goodness and care for others) (A)

2. How did Bobbitt live out the three elements of caring outlined in the definition of caring? (A)

3. Bobbitt only gave McClure \$20 worth of gas, but what made his gift one of value beyond measure?

(Bobbitt gave not from his surplus but from his need. The \$20 he spent in gas was the only money he had.)

Are we willing to give out of our need and not just the extra we may have?

What are some ways that we can give to others that doesn't involve money?

(When someone is going through a difficult time we can dedicate our time in listening to them, offering advice and suggestions when appropriate, and simply being with them and helping them to have a nice time away from the difficult situation.) (A)

4. Do you think Bobbitt was only motivated by McClure's need to have gas for her car, or do you think he considered other factors as well? (Bobbitt was also concerned about McClure's safety and cared enough to make sure she was safe by asking her to remain in her car.)

Does Bobbitt's act of generosity and level of caring challenge us to reconsider how generous we are with others in need whom we may not know?

What are some of the ways we can express our care for others we don't know? (A)

5. After learning that \$769 had been donated by people to help him Bobbitt said, "I have honestly met more good people than bad, I really have." Do you agree with Bobbitt's assumption that there are more good people than bad in the world?

Do you think assuming goodness or badness in others affects how others view and treat us? (B)

6. In discussing his homelessness Bobbitt said, 'Yeah, tell me about bad luck. But don't get me wrong. I'm here because of my own decisions. I got nobody to blame but myself.' D'Amico, who helped organize the assistance and donations for Bobbitt added, "He knows where he's at and he knows what he has to do to dig himself out." What virtue is Bobbitt living out in this statement? (responsibility)

How easy or difficult is it for us to live out this sense of personal responsibility when we make a mistake?

Do you think living with a sense of responsibility will help us to become stronger as a person and if yes how? (B)

7. McClure decided to give all of the money raised - \$400,000 so far! – to Bobbitt now and in separate funds: one for a house, one for small daily expenditures and one for his retirement. Do you think this is wise? Do you think Bobbitt will use the money to get back on his feet in getting work and providing for himself, or do you think it might enable him to put off working and to fully recover from his additions?

(Encourage students to apply the different aspects of the definition of wisdom to this question. This question can also be used for a debate – please see the extended activities below) (B)

8. McClure came to experience deeper truths about both receiving and giving by being placed in a very difficult situation. Have you had a similar experience that you would like to share where a difficult situation brought you to a deeper understanding about yourself, others or the power of a specific virtue?

(This is also a journal writing option presented below.) (B)

9. If Bobbitt hadn't received anything back from McClure in return for what he did for her do you think he still would have thought it was the right thing to do? (B)

Journal Writing Options

1. Write about a time when you took personal responsibility for a mistake that you made and how it made you stronger. Please include a description of the mistake, the lessons you learned from the experience, how you took responsibility, and how you improved from the experience. (B)

2. McClure came to experience deeper truths about both receiving and giving by being placed in a very difficult situation. Write about a time when you went through a difficult experience, and through that experience came to a deeper understanding about yourself, others and / or the power of a specific virtue. (B)

Extended Activity Options:

1. Organize a group debate on the question: Is it wise for McClure to now give to Bobbitt control of all of the money (\$400,000) that has been raised for him.

Team A advocates yes and presents a general opening statement (no more than 30 seconds)

Team B advocates no and presents a general opening statement (no more than 30 seconds)

Team A presents its first point (no more than 30 seconds)

Team B counters team A's first point (no more than 30 seconds)

Team B presents its first point

Team A counters team B's first point

Continue for as many points (arguments) as you like and finish with a summary statement from each team.

Each person from each team should have an opportunity to speak. Assign a team captain for each team to lead the preparation of their key points, and to anticipate the points the other team will make and your team's rebuttal. Give each team note cards to write out a summary of their key points.

Have each team review the definition of wisdom before their preparation. Key points to consider are whether McClure's plan will be effective in encouraging a good and lasting result.

2. Challenge students to consider what unexpected gift they can give to others over the next week and if you like then have students report back to the group on what they gave or did for another, how the other person responded and how it made them feel as the giver? Encourage students to consider gifts they can give that don't involve money such as helping out their parents with something in their home, helping a sibling, or simply spending time with someone who would appreciate it.

Washington Post Story: As presented in their [Inspired Life](#) series

A woman raised more than \$300,000 to help a homeless man who spent his last \$20 to buy her gas

By [Kristine Phillips](#) and [Marwa Eltagouri](#) November 24

Kate McClure was on her way to Philadelphia when she met Johnny Bobbitt Jr. He is a homeless man. But at that moment, she was the one in need of help.

The ensuing act of kindness would soon lead to a second chance for a 34-year-old man who has been living on the streets for a year and a half.

McClure ran out of gas while driving on Interstate 95 last month. She stopped at the nearest exit ramp, her heart pounding as she got out of the car to find a gas station, she said.

Then she met Bobbitt, who was sitting on the side of the road near the exit ramp holding a sign.

“He saw me pull over and knew something was wrong,” McClure recalled. “He told me to get back in the car and lock the doors.”

McClure said Bobbitt walked to a gas station and came back with a can filled with gas. He had spent \$20 — the only money he had — to buy it.

McClure decided to give back, so she started a GoFundMe campaign about two weeks ago to raise money to help Bobbitt get back on his feet. She had intended to raise \$10,000 to pay for an apartment, a vehicle and other expenses for the next four to six months.

In a video McClure posted to YouTube last week, Bobbitt sat in the back seat of a car reading a newspaper article about the GoFundMe campaign to help him get off his feet. Bobbitt appeared to be elated by the article and the donations that McClure and her boyfriend, Mark D’Amico, told him were flooding in. They had raised just \$769 at the time.

“God, that’s amazing. Damn, y’all did all that. That is awesome,” Bobbitt said.

He appeared to be overwhelmed by the kindness of strangers.

“People talk about Philly ... I have honestly met more good people than bad, I really have. Like y’all! I mean that is amazing,” Bobbitt told them.

“Well, you’re a good person — that’s why,” McClure said.

As of Friday morning, McClure has raised more than \$300,000 from 10,400 people.

The Washington Post was unable to reach McClure on Thursday, but she talked about her chance meeting with Bobbitt on the GoFundMe page.

“Johnny did not ask me for a dollar, and I couldn’t repay him at that moment because I didn’t have any cash,” she wrote.

She said she has been driving back to Bobbitt’s spot over the past few weeks, giving him a few dollars every time. She also repaid him, gave him a jacket, gloves, a hat and socks.

“One day I stopped to see him and had a few things in a bag to give him, one of which was a box of cereal bars so he could have something that he could carry around and eat,” McClure wrote. “He was very appreciative as usual and the first thing he said was, ‘Do you want one?’ ”

Another day, McClure said she gave Bobbitt two gift cards from the Wawa convenience store and a case of water. In response, Bobbitt, according to McClure, said he couldn’t wait to show “the guys” what she had just brought him, referring to a couple of friends he hangs out with.

“If those 2 statements alone do not give you a glimpse of the good heart this man has, I’m not sure anything will,” McClure said.

McClure and D’Amico told the Philadelphia Inquirer that they have gotten to know Bobbitt over the past weeks.

Bobbitt, who’s from North Carolina, became homeless because of problems with drugs and money, the Inquirer reported. The 34-year-old has been living on the streets for a year and a half.

A friend in North Carolina who had been close to Bobbitt told the Inquirer that Bobbitt was a talented paramedic and smart enough to become a doctor.

Public records show arrests in North Carolina dating back to 2001.

We told Johnny about the GoFundMe (campaign) he wants to say thank you to everyone who donated or shared! D’Amico said Bobbitt had talked to them about how his life took a turn for the worse. “Johnny said, ‘Yeah, tell me about bad luck. But don’t get me wrong. I’m here because of my own decisions. I got nobody to blame but myself,’ ” D’Amico told the Inquirer, adding later: “He knows where he’s at and he knows what he has to do to dig himself out.”

The Post called a number registered under the names of Bobbitt’s relatives in Henderson, N.C., more than 40 miles northeast of Raleigh. A man who answered said they “do not want to make a comment at this time. I’m sure you’d respect our privacy.”

A Facebook page that appears to belong to Bobbitt has not been updated for more than a year. Three-year-old photos portray a man who seemed to be, at one point, living happily with a significant other and their dogs. One picture from June 2014 shows a clean-shaven Bobbitt smiling next to a woman wearing a pink and white long-sleeve blouse and a dog.

McClure wrote on the GoFundMe page that she believes Bobbitt is driven to find a job.

“I believe that with a place to be able to clean up every night and get a good night’s sleep, his life can get back to normal,” she wrote. “Truly believe that all Johnny needs is one little break.”

Just before Thanksgiving, McClure shared an update on Bobbitt. She said she and her boyfriend had found a hotel where Bobbitt can stay for the holiday weekend while they work on finding him a permanent home. Bobbitt wanted to relax in the hotel and watch television, D’Amico said.

McClure and D’Amico gave Bobbitt money to buy contact lenses and took him to Walmart, where he bought socks, CNN reported.

On Thanksgiving Day, D’Amico bought Bobbitt a computer, according to CNN.

McClure and D’Amico said Bobbitt hasn’t told them what he intends to do with all the money, but told CNN that he plans to post a video detailing his plans for the future.

“The whole game changed in the last 24 to 48 hours. His expectations changed, and what he wanted to do changed,” D’Amico said. “He has a couple of places in Philadelphia that got him through and got him by. He wants to pay it forward.”

“His dreams aren’t champagne and caviar,” D’Amico said.

Resources

Washington Post Story Link

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2017/11/23/a-woman-raised-thousands-of-dollars-to-help-a-homeless-man-who-spent-his-last-20-to-buy-her-gas/?utm_term=.eb1e50691ea1

McClure’s fundraising campaign for Bobbitt

[GoFundMe campaign](#)

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