

“It's What We're Supposed To Do”

This lesson can be presented over 1-2 sessions. Instructors should feel free to use whichever discussion questions and activities you think best for your class or group. We advise giving students the sheet with the definitions of the virtues before the discussion questions.

Lesson Goals

Help students...

- develop a greater sense of empathy for others who are in need.
- see how even small actions to help another person can make a big difference for the individual receiving the help, and also change and benefit those providing the help.
- see how by creating a campaign that outlines a compelling need and gives individuals an effective way to address the need they can inspire others to help and to live more caring lives.
- be inspired to help others by donating their own time, talent and / or resources.
- consider the value of living with a sense of duty in taking responsibility for the well-being of others.
- appreciate the power of solidarity when people come together to work toward a shared goal like helping others in need.

Primary Virtues / Character Traits

Duty: something that one is expected or required to do according to one's own standards, or as a citizen and member of various communities

Caring: to help others; a caring person lives with empathy, compassion and generosity

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

Compassion: feeling of sympathy for the distress of others, with the desire to help

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

Secondary Virtues / Character Traits

Responsibility: accepting and meeting the demands of our duty in life; being accountable; pursuing excellence

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

Leader Introduction:

Sometimes when we see another person in need we feel badly about their situation and would like to help, but we don't. There may be good reasons that we don't help... we may not know how to help, or we can think of a way to help but don't have the resources or skills to do it. When we see someone in need, we often can help though! Today we're going to watch the inspiring story of an electrician who saw a need and instead of just moving on with his regular life, he decided to help. In the process of helping, he started a movement of people coming together to help elderly individuals in need.

Link to Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqxeyLdCflk>

Leader Summary:

John Kinney and Gloria's Gladiators show us both the difference that one person can make when we help another person in need, and how much more we can accomplish when we ask others to join in and help. Let's consider what motivated Kinney to help Gloria and how this story applies to our lives.

Discussion Question Options *(discussion prompts / answers are in parentheses or bullet points)*

Before beginning our discussion, let's read over the virtues and their definitions, which is found in the online lesson as a separate document.

1. John Kinney said in the interview, "I saw it (Gloria's situation) on a Friday and it stuck with me over the weekend and I had to go back there." Which virtues from our list of highlighted virtues does this statement reflect?
(**empathy** in that Kinney likely thought about how difficult it must be for Gloria to live within those conditions, and **compassion** in that Kinney not only felt sympathy for Gloria but importantly had a sincere desire to help her.)

If students don't discuss duty above then prompt that discussion with....

Let's talk about the last part of Kinney's statement, "and I had to go back there" and also "It's what were supposed to do." What virtue do these statements reflect?
(**duty** – Kinney has a strong personal code that he should help others in need)

Do you agree with Kinney that we should all have that sense of duty to help others, even those who we don't have a personal connection with?

2. Kinney decided that given the many needs Gloria has he needed to ask more people to help, so he started a fundraiser page titled, "Nice old lady needs help" and within 24 hours people had donated more than \$3,500, and the amount has since topped \$100,000. The money paid for skilled professionals to work on the house, but importantly it also inspired many volunteers to help with donated materials, yard work and food. Gloria's Gladiators Facebook group now has over 19,000 followers.

What do you think are the key parts of Kinney's approach that are motivating so many people to want to help?

(-he presented a simple and compelling need "nice old lady needs help"
- he showed potential donors exactly what their donations would go toward
- by using a fundraising page through social media he could reach many people and it made it easy for them to donate
- he gave people other opportunities to help such as yard cleanup and bringing over food for the workers)

Do you think that by giving people an opportunity to come together in **solidarity** to work with others for a good cause we increase an individual's willingness to participate and to help?

3. When we help someone else we often focus on how our help affects the person or the group of people we are helping, but helping others often changes us as well. How do you think the volunteers helping Gloria changed both Gloria and the volunteers?
(Gloria became more happy, thankful, and more open and trusting of others. The volunteers felt good that they were able to help someone in need, and Kinney's statements show us how thankful he is both for his relationship with Gloria and for the sense of purpose that Gloria's Gladiators has given to his life.)

4. Let's share some stories about instances when we have helped someone else in need. It can be a very small but still important example of how we have helped someone else within our family, among our friends, a fellow student or someone we didn't even know personally. How did our helping another person affect that person and how did it affect us?

Let's share some examples of when we came together in **solidarity** to help another person or group of people in need, or to help with a cause that is important to us.

5. In the news and general conversation, we hear about many examples of people not caring and in fact harming others. Do you think the amazing response from the people of Woburn, Mass and across the country to help Gloria tells us there are still many people within our communities who do care and want to help, or do you think most people don't care about helping others?

Journal Writing Options

1. Sometimes, the best way to help another person is to simply let them know you appreciate them and care about them. Think about someone in your life such a grandparent, aunt or uncle, favorite teacher or coach and write them a letter. Some ideas to include in the letter are why that person is important to you, expressing your gratitude for their presence in your life, asking how they are doing and telling them about what's new in your life.
2. Kinney has a strong sense of duty in viewing it as his responsibility to help another person in need within his community. Write about how you view your own sense of duty to help others. How specifically should you help others within your family, school, among your friends, as a member of your local community, our nation and even people in other countries.

Extended Activity:

The Creativity Challenge - organize students into teams of 2-4 and ask each team to come up with a creative project to help another person in need or a cause. Write on the board the definition of **Creativity** - the ability to think of new ideas; to come up with new approaches for accomplishing a goal or solving a problem.

Teams can demonstrate creativity by coming up with a unique:

- need or cause to address
- plan for recruiting volunteers to help and for inspiring people to donate money
- way/s to deliver the assistance and to become more effective in addressing the need

Each team should then share their project with the group as a whole. Each person in the team should participate in the presentation. Have the group vote on which project they think was the most creative.

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