

A Goldendoodle's Second Chance: a Story of Generosity, Love and Solidarity"

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...

- Understand the meaning of generosity and love
- Explore how compassion can motivate us to help those in need
- Appreciate the importance of caring for those who cannot care for themselves
- Understand how acts of love can inspire others to be kind
- Recognize the power of solidarity in supporting a cause
- Discover how sacrifices for others can lead to personal fulfillment.

Highlighted Virtues and Character Traits

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

Love - freely giving of ourselves for the betterment of another, especially when it requires sacrifice, without expecting anything in return

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

Hero - a person who is regarded as a model due to their acts of courage, or nobility of purpose and noble qualities

Leader Introduction:

Today, we'll hear the inspiring story of Dylan McCay and Emily Roberts, a young couple whose wedding funds and savings account took a large hit after a Facebook post alerted them to an injured dog, a Goldendoodle that had been abandoned along the side of the road. Instead of ignoring the issue or hoping someone else would help, they made the decision to take the matter into their own hands and to do everything they could to save the dog's life. Let's watch the video to see how their story unfolded and how their compassion, generosity and selflessness inspired many others to help.

Lesson Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fD4pWwChDk>

Leader Summary:

Dylan and Emily's story reminds us that being a hero doesn't always mean rescuing people in dramatic situations. Sometimes, it's about making selfless decisions in the face of uncertainty and risk to do what we know is right. This couple gave up their wedding fund and savings to ensure Acklin received the surgery she desperately needed to live. After this news segment

aired, Dylan and Emily's love and compassion sparked a ripple effect of generosity and solidarity. They had hoped to raise \$11,000 for Acklin's recovery... but their story touched so many hearts that donations have exceeded \$44,000 and counting!

As we reflect on this story, let's think about how Dylan and Emily's story and the virtues they lived out can guide us in our daily lives and awaken us to our own opportunities to be heroes for others.

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

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

1. In the story, Dylan and Emily cared so much about Acklin that they gave up their wedding fund to help save her life, even though they had just met her. Why do you think they felt so strongly about helping Acklin?
(They felt compassion for her in having sympathy for the distress she was experiencing; they likely realized that no one else would help Acklin so it was up to them to try and save her life or knowing that she would likely die; they love animals)

Let's share some examples of when we cared about someone or something so much that we were willing to sacrifice something valuable, even if it was simply a lot of time and care to help someone else. Let's include in our stories how sacrificing for another person or cause made you feel?

2. How can we use Dylan and Emily's example to find ways to show compassion within our own community? Especially for people or things that cannot care for themselves?
(Volunteer at animal shelters, bring old blankets or food to animal shelters, visit retirement homes to visit the residents, pick up trash to keep animals safe from eating it, donate used but clean toys or clothes to those in need)
3. Dylan and Emily gave up their wedding fund and personal savings account to save Acklin, even though they were just a young couple starting out in life without much money to spare. What virtues did they display through this action?
(Generosity and Love)

Do you think that there is a difference between giving something out of our surplus versus giving something you need to help another person or a cause?

4. Dylan and Emily hoped to raise \$11,000, but their story inspired over \$44,000 in donations. Why do you think so many people contributed and what virtues does this reflect?
(The couple's compassion inspired others to join their cause, demonstrating the power of generosity and a noble purpose to inspire solidarity.)
5. There's no news yet about how Dylan and Emily will use the extra money, although we can guess that it might go back into their savings and wedding accounts and/or towards rehabilitation costs for Acklin. What do you think any extra money should go to?
6. Do you agree that Dylan and Emily's actions make them heroes? Why or why not?

How can we be a hero in our own lives by living with courage and/or doing something that is noble?

(Standing up for kids who are being bullied; giving of our time, talent and money and not just from our surplus but from our needs; standing up for a cause that others may disagree with but we believe is right)

Journal Writing Options:

1. Write about a time when you witnessed or participated in an act of generosity that required real sacrifice. What happened, and how did it impact you and others?
2. Write on the idea of being a hero in everyday life. How can we be a hero in our own lives by living with courage and/or doing something that is noble?

Extended Activity:

In small groups, write and perform a skit where people must come together to help someone or something in need and that requires real sacrifice. At the end of the skit, have one or two members of the team outline the virtues demonstrated in your story.

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