



# Fifth Grade

There are heroes who share in the adventure of showing God's love to people in the world around them by caring for those who have disabilities.

## Lesson 8



### Each student will–

- Learn about the heroic acts of Helen Keller and Jean Vanier
- Be challenged by the examples of Helen Keller and Jean Vanier
- Identify one way he could imitate the examples of Helen Keller and Jean Vanier in his own world



### Outline

1. The heroic acts
2. The obstacles overcome
3. The hero in my world



### Realized Impact

Students at this stage in life have the ability to show concern and to be sensitive toward others. Relationships outside the home are beginning to be very important to them. This is the time to help them form their thinking about those who have disabilities. This is another opportunity to reinforce the truth that our value comes from God Himself, rather than from our own abilities to perform or from our physical appearance. If students respect the value of the lives of others—apart from human measurements of performance or appearance—they will also feel more secure in who God created them to be. All of these truths come together to enable students to enjoy the heroic and adventurous lives that God has intended for them to live.



## Materials

*Pigs Might Fly* by Dick King-Smith and Mary Rayne or *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick. You may also show the film version, *The Mighty* (Miramax, 1998). (Note: If you showed *The Mighty* during Lesson 3, then you can just refer to it, show another excerpt from it, or just review it before the discussion.)

Resource materials for research on Jean Vanier and Helen Keller:

### Helen Keller

Search for “Helen Keller” at [www.biography.com](http://www.biography.com)

*Helen Keller* by Margaret Davidson (Scholastic Paperbacks, 1989), 95 pages for ages 9-12

*Helen Keller* by Stewart and Polly Anne Graff (Yearling, 1991), 64 pages for ages 9-12

### Jean Vanier

“The Founding of L’Arche”, the book introduction in *An Ark for the Poor: The Story of L’Arche* by Jean Vanier (Novalis, 1995)

For a short timeline of Jean Vanier’s life, go to [www.larchecanada.org](http://www.larchecanada.org)

*Heart Has Its Reasons* on VHS (Vision Video, 2001)

Copies of **Heroes Serving Those with Disabilities** handout for each group



## Making an Entrance

Show a clip from the film *The Mighty* or read an excerpt from *Pigs Might Fly*. If you have already used *The Mighty* in a previous lesson, you can refer to it here. If you’re using *Pigs Might Fly*, set up the scene you will read to the class ahead of time.

Say—**In the book *Pigs Might Fly*, the pigs live on a pig farm, and they communicate in their own language. One day, a mother pig, Mrs. Barleylove, had a litter of babies. But one of her babies didn’t look like the others. He was smaller and weaker. In fact, his front feet looked more like a dog’s paws than the sharp hooves of a pig. Normally, a small, deformed pig would be “disposed of” by the farmer. However, this one, Daggie Dogfoot, escaped.**

Now read aloud to the class pages 21, beginning with “No offense,” through page 23, ending with “pigs might fly.”



Then ask–

- **How do people sometimes treat those with disabilities?**
- **Why do people behave this way toward the disabled?**
- **What is a hero?** (*A hero is a person who is willing to give up his own personal comfort to do something that helps or benefits others.*)

Say–**Today we’re going to take a look at the lives of two people who chose to live a heroic adventure with God. The adventure they lived was one that showed God’s love to people with disabilities, as well as enjoying the gifts these people had to share with them. Our lives are valuable—not because of our ability to perform or our physical appearance, but because God made us and He values our lives. Those with disabilities have their own unique value, and there have been heroes who have reminded us of that truth.**



### Informing

Students will research the life of either Jean Vanier (of L’Arche) or Helen Keller. Possible information sources range from short Internet biographies to books to videos (see the **Materials** section). Use the source that is most appropriate for your classroom and time frame. Divide the class into groups and assign each group either Jean Vanier or Helen Keller.

Say–**We will be working in groups to answer the questions on the Heroes Serving Those with Disabilities worksheet. Each group should choose a Web site or book to use for their source of information for their report.**

Give the students time to choose a resource and work together as a group. Ask each group to report their findings to the class. Then discuss the answers to the first five questions:

1. *Which hero are you writing about?*
2. *Who influenced this hero’s life?*
3. *What did the hero accomplish?*
4. *What problems did this hero have to overcome?*
5. *How did this hero show God’s love to people?*



### Valuing

Now discuss the groups' answers to questions six and seven–

*How has this hero's work continued to impact people today?*

*Do you think there is a need for a hero who does this kind of work now? Why or why not?*



### Changing

Discuss the students' answers to *In what ways could you imitate this hero?* If you wish, plan a class project using student input from this discussion.



### Builds into:

Sanctity of Life, Social Justice, Purity



## Heroes Serving Those with Disabilities

1. Which hero are you writing about?
2. Who influenced this hero's life?
3. What did the hero accomplish?
4. What problems did this hero have to overcome?
5. How did this hero show God's love to people?
6. How has this hero's work continued to impact people today?
7. Do you think there is a need for a hero who does this kind of work now? Why or why not?
8. In what ways could you imitate this hero?

