

EYES ON THE STARS [heroes]

THIS WEEK

Media has the power to create heroes and heroines. But these celebrities—shaped by TV, sports, movies, or music videos—aren't necessarily heroic. Sometimes their moral behaviors aren't ones that they'd like our kids to follow. This TalkSheet will help you discuss why they look up to certain people and what a hero is.

OPEN

Try this charades-type game! Before your meeting, write names of some heroes and heroines in large letters on individual pieces of 8½ x 11 paper or Post-It notes. You can include different kinds of heroes including (but not limited to)—

- Superheroes—Superman, X-Men, Spiderman, Batman, and so on.
- Sports champions—Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, Andre Agassi, Brandi Chastain, Marion Jones, and so on.
- Actors—Julia Roberts, Jim Carrey, Robin Williams, Cameron Diaz, and so on.
- Music stars—Madonna, Dave Matthews, Garth Brooks, Faith Hill, Britney Spears, and so on.

Once you've got these on paper, don't let your kids see them. Split your group up into two (or more) teams. Each team will take turns having a volunteer come up to the front. You'll then stick a piece of paper or Post-It on the volunteer's back or forehead (a hat with duct tape on the front works well). Don't let the volunteer see the name of the hero! In a given amount of time (a minute or so), the other group members have to describe the hero or heroine on the paper to the volunteer—without saying the name of the person in any context. If the volunteer can guess the name of the hero, the team gets a point.

THE DISCUSSION, BY NUMBERS

1. How many of your kids still have the same hero now as they did when they were younger? Have them share why the person is important to them and considered to be hero-worthy.
2. Try to get a group consensus on this item. Discuss the difference between a hero and a celebrity—heroes do heroic things. They are worthy of admiration even if they are not well known. Celebrities are media creations.
3. Point out that heroic deeds don't always bring fame. Fame has nothing to do with morality today—instead it deals with what is popular and trendy. And remind them that a heroic act may be something as insignificant—even helping someone out—if it is an act of discipline, obedience, and respect.

4. Ask the kids to share the people they chose. You will most likely get a variety of answers. Take this time to talk about their role models. What traits or characteristics should good role models have?

5. These verses deal with biblical heroes and heroines in the Bible. Discuss with your kids what made each of them heroic and how God used their deeds. You may also want to read Hebrews 11, which discusses heroes and heroines of the Christian faith.

THE CLOSE

Everyone has a hero—but they should be smart about who they choose. The apostle Paul said, "Imitate me." He wasn't boasting! He was saying, "I'll be your hero. You need a hero who acts as Jesus wants him to do. Imitate me as I imitate Christ" (Philippians 3:17, author's paraphrase). Don't model yourself after anyone who does not reflect the values and high standards of the Christian faith.

Challenge your kids to choose their heroes wisely—and also to live heroically through their actions and examples. Some of your kids think they are nobody—encourage them to believe they can do great things for the kingdom of God. Paul wrote (in Philippians 4:13) that "I can do everything through him [Christ] who gives me strength." Let the group members know there are younger Christians looking up to them and talk about ways that they can imitate Christ in their daily lives.

MORE

- Play a group scavenger hunt to find pictures, cardboard stand-ups, or magazines with heroic people on them. You may want to split your kids up into groups and give each group a list of heroes that they need to "find." They can go to bookstores, shopping malls, grocery stores, or their homes—anywhere where they can find information or pictures on the heroes listed. Have them either buy or retrieve the information—or just write down the store, place, article, or magazine that they got the info from.
- Hold a contest to see who can find the most interesting facts about their hero or heroine on the Internet, in magazines, or wherever they can find some information. Whoever brings the most unique, quirky, or interesting fact about their hero gets a prize. Did this info change the way that they feel about their heroes? How?