



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades 3 to 6
About the Author:	With permission, from "Media Violence: Pulling the Plug on the Power Myth," in Kids Talk TV: Inside Out, © Office of Communication, United Church of Christ.
Duration:	50 minutes

Sheroes and Heroes

Overview

This lesson introduces students to some of the myth-building techniques of television, by comparing real world (s)heroes with TV world (s)heroes and by looking at stereotypes in the world of TV (s)heroes. The lesson begins with a discussion about the traits and characteristics that distinguish heroism in the real world and heroism in the fantasy world of television. In small groups, students will create lists of sheroes and heroes from television and from real life and, using props they have created, will present these people to fellow students. As an extension activity, students will write a short story about a real life hero that they know.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- understanding of the differences between real world (s)heroes and TV world (s)heroes
- awareness of how stars and super (s)heroes are created on television
- awareness of the stereotypes that are used in the world of TV (s)heroes

Preparation and Materials

- *Easel and pad of paper, newsprint, tape, markers, make-up, pencils, highlighter*
- *Male and female superstar clothes, scarves, hats from real life jobs*
- *Four large cardboard boxes*

Procedure

Introduction

Many people love action and adventure. Action packed TV programs, films and comic books are filled with heroes, sheroes and villains. Sheroes and heroes stand for all that is good. Villains represent all that is evil.

First, we'll be looking at why we have (s)heroes and why we like them.



The stuff that (s)heroes are made of

Sheroes and heroes are the "good guys." They have power and use it for good. They care about others and struggle to make the world a better and safer place. They fight evil. With extra strength and powers, sheroes and heroes fight the big problems ordinary humans face every day. They defend what is right and use violence only in self-defense. Usually they have strong bodies and minds and are fairly good-looking.

Think about who you would like to be or who you admire. Think about who is made the shero and hero in cartoon programs and movies. Who is well known and considered hot stuff in the music and sports worlds? Are these characters and people mostly male or female?

There are many kinds of (s)heroes. In the TV world, they can be characters in our favourite cartoons, movies or crime dramas or a real-life person. In real life, they can be famous or known to only a few people. A shero or hero can be an aunt or uncle, a sports star, rapper, actor or friend. What they have in common is that people look up to them. Their struggles for good give us hope and remind us of the power of human goodness.

For your information:

The Latin root of the word "courageous" is "cor," which means heart, or to have heart.

Class Activity 1 - Naming sheroes and heroes

What you need: easel and pad of paper, markers

- Use four sheets of paper. In the center of each one, write the name of a TV shero, a TV hero, a real life shero and a real life hero.
- The real life sheroes and heroes can be found in your family, community, nation and around the globe. Circle these names and list the qualities and actions that made them sheroes and heroes. Do you share some of these qualities? Do your parents, sisters, brothers, or others in your family?

Activity 2 - Guess who? Heroes and sheroes

What you need: four large cardboard boxes, tape, lots of newsprint, markers, hats (for example, fire chief hat, nurse's hat, police hat, construction hat and others), cape, scarves, cloth, face make-up, mirrors.

- Using the cardboard boxes, create a giant TV that is big enough for a person to stand in.
- Cover it with newsprint, both inside and out.
- Break the class into four groups: two groups of artists, two groups of actors.

Artists: One group is responsible for drawing TV heroes and sheroes on the inside of the giant TV; the other group is responsible for drawing real life sheroes and heroes on the outside of the giant TV.



Actors: One group will dress up and role-play their favourite TV sheroes and heroes; the other group will dress up and role-play their favourite real life heroes and sheroes.

- Actors act out their roles standing inside or outside the TV, depending on whether they're a TV character or a real life person.
- Artists guess who they are.
- When finished, artists invite actors to take a tour of their TV; actors guess who the drawings represent.

Discussion:

- What were the differences in appearance and activities of the real life people and the TV characters?
- Are there any similarities?
- Were there an equal number of men and women?
- Did people have diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds? How many were people of colour?

Extension Activity

Journal entry: Write a short story about a real life shero or hero that you know. If you don't think you know any, ask around. If someone is recommended, interview the person about what he or she did. What things in your life have you done that were courageous? Write about them.

Evaluation

- Group presentations
- Journal entries

