

“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one trusted with much, much more will be expected.” Luke 12: 48b (New Century Version) This means, in other words, great gifts mean great responsibilities, greater gifts, greater responsibilities! Or, as Spiderman would say: “With great power comes great responsibility.”

Introduction

The theme for this year is Heroes and Villains and we will look at them in:

- fiction
- the Bible
- community
- us.



Each of the four sessions will include:

- who?
- Bible reading
- activity or craft
- think about
- battle plan
- prayer.

This resource poses questions for you as leaders to share and talk things through with the Pilots. There are more ideas for discussion points elsewhere in the resource book together with lists of suggestions for general games and games related to specific Superheroes which could be used to embed the message. Very often a story can best be remembered by playing a game or activity related to the theme. Where the resource refers to a Company “cool wall”, you will find an explanation of this at the end of this section.

The battle plan will include suggestions for Pilots to undertake an action. This may take the form of learning a Bible verse, an action related to the theme, or keeping a personal log. Links will be provided to YouTube clips or websites, where appropriate for gathering further information. Talking about heroes will most likely be easier than talking about villains.

Heroes are made by the path they choose, not the powers they are graced with.”
Tony Stark (Iron Man)

Session one: heroes and villains in fiction

Who?

Discuss superheroes, supervillains or other fictional heroes, villains with the Pilots. Who are their favourites? You might find the Pilots know an awful lot more about these characters than you do, so be ready to learn from them.

Bible readings



Romans 15: 1-2

Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, “How can I help?” (The Message).

Activity / craft

- Start the Cool Wall. Have some pictures or names of superheroes or villains ready to use.
- Invite Pilots to create their own superhero or supervillain. This could be a sharing of ideas, following a time of small group discussion or Pilots could draw or make a three-dimensional playdough model.
- Design / make and wear the costume. Have a parade.

Think about

- If Pilots could have a superpower, what would it be?
- How would they use their superpower to help others? How might that work? Remember, with great power comes great responsibility.
- What other characteristics should a superhero have?
- What might a superhero or supervillain’s back story tell us about them? What made them become a hero? What made them become a villain?
- Are heroes always perfect? Discuss some of the positive and negative characteristics of the Pilots favourite superhero / villain eg Superman was gentle, kind-hearted, the Hulk got incredibly angry, Iron Man could be rude, Harry Potter loyal and brave, Wonder Woman loving and compassionate, Elastigirl (Mrs Incredible) represents a mother’s ability to stretch herself in all direction, the envious nature of Lex Luther.
- What we can learn from our flawed heroes?



Battle plan

Encourage the Pilots to develop their 'super memory'.

Ask Adventurers to learn by heart: Romans 15:2

Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" (The Message).

Ask Deckhands to learn: Nehemiah 8:10b "The joy of God is your / my strength!" (New Century version)

Prayer



Powerful God, you made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. You gave us life, a super life in a super world full of super things.

You gave us a super gift; the gift of choice. We can choose how we live, use our lives, treat other people, and use the all gifts you have given to us. Help us to recognise our gifts and always to use them wisely and well. May we use them to help others but chiefly to glorify you and not ourselves. Amen

Session two: heroes and villains in the Bible

Who?

There are so many stories in the Bible that portray heroes and villains. Daniel is the chosen character here, but you may have a favourite character – choose them if you wish, then follow the format below to explore more about them and their stories. Other character suggestions may be found in the Ideas and Resources section.

Bible reading



Read Daniel 6. If you can, you may like to watch the YouTube clip of the story: <http://bit.ly/davidgoliathvideo>

- Who was the hero?
- Who was the villain?
- Why were they cast in these roles?

Activity / craft

- Make lion masks:
www.firstpalette.com/printable/lion-mask.html
www.pinterest.co.uk/simplemomproject/li-on-mask-templates/
- Make a poster to show your Bible hero /villain,
- perhaps with an appropriate Bible verse, and a made up a slogan to go with it.
- Use craft sticks to make your Bible hero / villain. Add one or two other characters from the story you have chosen, make some scenery and perform the story.
- Make a bookmark showing your Bible hero accompanied by a Bible verse.
- Continue with the Cool Wall.

Think about

- Are villains always defeated?
- Does the villain's back story tell us why they 'went bad'?
- Can people change?
- Are heroes perfect?

The Bible teaches us that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We may discover that, like our superheroes, not one of our Biblical heroes is perfect. However, God was still able to use them. This demonstrates that we can all be used by God, imperfect as we are. We must give thanks for great deeds and ask for forgiveness for failings.

Battle plan

Challenge the Pilots to think about their actions and attitudes towards others. Especially others who appear to be different.

Prayer



Faithful God, help us to remember that you are always with us, whether we speak to you or not. Help us to be strong – standing up for what we know is right, speaking out when we see and hear wrong things being done and said. Make us a hero for you, so much so that people who do not know of you, will want to know more about you. Amen.

Session three: heroes and villains in community

Who?

Discuss with Pilots real-life and modern-day heroes. Have some newspapers, national and local, to look at and see if they can find some examples of the above.

See if they can find the same for villains.

The arrival of the coronavirus in the early part of 2020 threw up heroes and villains. Discuss this with Pilots:

- Who do they remember stood out as heroes?
- Who might the villains have been?

You may remember the image of superheroes bowing down to NHS workers? If you can, follow the link below and find a copy online. You could use it as a conversation starter about what is a community hero. www.itv.com/news/central/2020-05-15/who-s-behind-this-superhero-image-of-our-key-workers

A huge focus on climate change was seen in 2019, along with the rise of Greta Thunberg, Extinction Rebellion, and demonstrations by school children around the world. Ask the question: "Where are the heroes and villains in such events?"

Did Pilots notice the villains? Younger Pilots may not have done but the older Adventurers and Voyagers may well be able to contribute their thoughts.

Bible reading Psalm 104



This is a long psalm, but worth the read.
It refers to all creation.

Split it into sections and share it with the Pilots. What does the Psalm tell us about God, creation and how God feels about the world? What is our responsibility here?

Activities

- Go back to the Bible reading and the sections. Ask the Pilots to find the mention of creatures of the sea and earth. Ask them to look for words or phrases in parts of the psalm that show that the earth is made for God's glory and pleasure and that all life depends on God's continuing care. Make a big collage of these words. Use different colours and sizes of fonts and styles of lettering. Those Pilots who do not wish to write could decorate the collage with drawings of these things.
- Think of ways in which you could be an eco-hero in your church / school / community by making changes that will have a positive impact on the environment. These could include carrying out an environmental audit of your meeting place.
- Carrying out a waste survey. Remember to keep a record of everything that gets thrown away at home in a week. Are you surprised by how much or how little you throw away? How could you reduce the amount you throw away? Is there a follow on to this, eg are you surprised by how much or how little you throw away? How could you reduce the amount you throw away?
- Ask the Pilots if they know about Captain Tom Moore, now Sir Tom Moore? Are they able to find out some information about him?
- Find out what might be happening in your area. You may have a local hero such as teenager Tom Hunt and his dog, Baggy.
www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52095386
- Find out about Rob Arnold – Big Art from beach rubbish www.keepbritaintidy.org/news/waves-plastic-inspiring-art
- Continue with the Cool Wall – are there new names to add?

It would appear from the above stories, that heroes can be any age.

Craft

- Make a musical instrument from junk and use it in worship.
- Turn a glass jar into a decorative vase / pen holder / candle holder. Paint or decorate it using pieces of coloured tissue.
- Create a picture or model using junk.

Think about

It is not always obvious who the community heroes are and what they are doing. Very often the villains get the headlines.

- Who are the heroes in our communities?
- Do our community heroes always get recognised? Should they be rewarded?
- Who are the villains? Remember one of our definitions "a person responsible for specified problems, harm, or damage".
- What about other villains in the community eg vandals who destroy local amenities?
- What about graffiti artists? Is Banksy a villain? Heroes to some, villains to others?
- There may be an opportunity to talk to older Pilots about drug dealers, County Lines – the lives ruined by these villains.
- Think who are the heroes? The police, the medics, the church?

For many of us today our life is made easier by modern technology and machinery. We travel faster and further than ever before; we use materials such as plastic for convenience.

- Can we ever return to a life without manufactured goods or without technology?
- How can we create a balance in our lives?
- Might the environment benefit from you and your family by eating one meat free meal a week?
- Is it always large corporations who are responsible for the environmental crisis?
- How much do our individual actions contribute?
- What can we do to have a positive impact on our community and on our world?

Battle plan

Think of three ways you will try to be more community minded at home, at school or at church.



Prayer

Creator God,
You fill the earth and sea and sky with life.
Help us to care for all of your creation.
Make us aware of our responsibilities as stewards of the earth.
Holder of the past, present and future.
Help us to learn from our mistakes in the past and to do better in the future.
Help us to remember that you created us all in your image and that you want us to love others as you love us.
Amen.



Remember, heroes might not always look like we expect them to!

Session four: heroes and villains in us

Heroes may appear to be people with special abilities, like Superman or Wonder Woman, but we can be heroes too by following Jesus and helping others to walk with him.

Bible Readings

Luke 6 12-16 – Jesus chooses the 12 apostles.

We tend to think that Jesus had only 12 disciples, when in fact he had many. These verses show Luke's account of how Jesus chose the 12 he most trusted, naming them his apostles. So, what is the difference between a disciple and an apostle? According to the Oxford Dictionary:

- Disciple: A personal follower of Christ during his life, especially one of the 12 Apostles
- Apostle: An important early Christian teacher or pioneering missionary; A vigorous and pioneering advocate or supporter of a particular policy, idea, or cause.

So, you can be a disciple without being an apostle but to be an apostle you must first be a disciple. Jesus' apostles were ordinary people, however when filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost they received the 'superpower' and moved from being 'learners' to 'doers'. They became vigorous advocates and heroes for Jesus.

Ask the Pilots who would they choose to be on their team if they had a special mission to carry out? It might be a school project, or a quiz team or sports team. What qualities would they be looking for?

Share with the Pilots the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit as seen in Acts 2:1-12 and 41. This is what we now call Pentecost, the Church's birthday.

It may seem that there are a lot of Bible references quoted in this session, but it is important for the Pilots to understand where their 'superpower' comes from as they become heroes for Jesus.

Bible reading

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him, who gives me strength. (NIV)

Activity / craft

Holy Spirit balloons.

- Give each Pilot an uninflated balloon. Before you tell the story of Pentecost, ask the Pilots to look at their balloons. There is not a lot they can do with them as flippy floppy bits of rubber. As you tell the story ask them to breathe small breaths into their balloon, holding them tightly so that the air doesn't escape. Talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit. When all the balloons are filled, give the signal to let go and let all the balloons fly round the room. The balloons become useful and can provide fun or enhance a place when filled with air. When the balloons are let go, the air can power them around the room. They can go anywhere when released.

Explain that at Pentecost, the followers of Jesus heard a mighty rushing wind. When the Pilots pick up their deflated balloons, talk about how the church was lifeless before God sent the Holy Spirit. After the Holy Spirit breathed life into the Church, people began to tell everyone they saw about Jesus. Despite speaking different languages, everyone could understand what they were saying, and thousands of people were added to the Church. The Church became alive and had the power to be what God wanted it to be.

If you have someone who can make modelling balloons you could use them to demonstrate that, when filled with the Holy Spirit, we can be shaped into what God wants us to be. Or, you could blow up a balloon inside a jar or bottle to demonstrate that we can take on a different shape when filled with the Spirit. Be aware that some children have a fear of balloons – they may want just to watch or to do another activity in another part of the room.

Popcorn

Make some popcorn to demonstrate change and growth when heat is applied to the corn, just as we can be changed with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Notice how some of the kernels respond more quickly to the heat than others, just as some people respond more quickly to the Holy Spirit. Others need more time, and some won't pop at all. But when each kernel is filled with the heat, it jumps around like people who can't contain their joy in Christ! Different flavours can be used to suggest different gifts given by the Spirit.

Collage

Collect pictures of things that need power before they work eg torch, TV, phone, windmill, kite etc. Make a collage with these.

Kites

You may be able to make a kite from red, orange and yellow paper and fly it outside.

www.wikihow.com/Make-an-Easy-Kite

Pillowcase art

Provide each Pilot with a plain pillowcase. Decorate with fabric pens. Write the words 'Be all that God wants me to be' and decorate with balloons. Follow the rules given with your fabric pens for setting the dye.

Think about

- Ask Pilots why they think Jesus chose ordinary people with faults and flaws to work with him and carry on his work?
- How do they think Jesus equips ordinary people like them, to become superheroes for Christ?
- Who, or what, might get in the way of us being heroes for Jesus? People who might make fun of us and try to turn us away from Jesus. Are they villains? Such people might include our friends.

Jesus gave his disciples a superpower: The Holy Spirit. The disciples felt frightened and lost after Jesus left them but when the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost they were changed into bold, confident people who could tell others about Jesus.

Prayer



Lord Jesus, we thank and praise you for the life you have given us. Thank you for your Holy Spirit who is making us become more like you. We know that sometimes we will make mistakes, but we know that you will forgive us and guide us to do better. We pray that we may be Heroes for Jesus so that you may be seen and reflected in our lives. Amen.

Battle plan

Walking the Way is the URC's focus on whole life discipleship. Have a look at the 30-day challenge. Perhaps Pilots can do some of these. Remember, they are not called to do everything, they will all have different skills and gifts but there may be things here which they can do, and which could become part of their everyday life.

"I believe there's a hero in all of us, that keeps us honest, gives us strength, makes us noble and finally allows us to die with pride. Even though sometimes we must be steady and give up the thing we want most. Even our dreams." (Aunt May from Spiderman)

Visit the website for our Pilots Walking the Way challenge: www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains

Ideas and resources

General games and activities

- Kim's Game – using pictures of fictional heroes and villains.
- Pairs – hide images of heroes round the room. Give Pilots an image of villain; they must find a match.
- Timed challenges – have three or four challenges to be done in a ten minute period eg bean bags thrown into hoops, spaced at different intervals with points for each hoop; ping pong balls in the bucket – score points for each one in; stay still for one minute etc.
- Superhero Says – played like Simon Says.
- Villain, Villain, Hero – played like Duck Duck Goose.
- X-ray vision – create some feely bags with a number (eg six) of non-see through bags or gloves. Put an item(s) inside. The Pilots are not allowed to look but must feel the bag and try to work out what is inside, or you may allow them to put their hands into the bag to feel and guess the contents.

Cool Wall

A few years ago, the TV programme Top Gear had a weekly 'vehicle Cool Wall'. Cars were moved up and down the wall according to performance, design, price, and personal likes and dislikes of the programme's three presenters.

Start up a company Cool Wall for your Pilots' group with a mix of characters from the Bible and real life. You can either print pictures from the internet or just put names up. Use a long piece of lining paper or wallpaper, divided into two parts and headed 'cool' and 'uncool'. The names / pictures can then be put into either into either category depending on Pilots' opinion.

As you go through the worship resource hearing stories about characters, add the names to the wall explaining why they have been placed there. They can be moved around as more is learned about them, or moved by others who may think a placing isn't appropriate.

Suggestions for Bible Cool Wall characters:

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joseph (Old Testament), Pharaoh, David, Goliath, Daniel, Samson, Esther, Jonah, Ruth, Mary (Mother of Jesus), Joseph (New Testament), Simon Peter, Judas Iscariot, Herod, Martha, boy with loaves and fishes, Pontius Pilate, Saul / Paul, Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, Zacchaeus.



Suggestions for secular characters:
Use the local and national newspapers or access the internet if you can. Discover people in your town, community, church or school. Ask the Pilots for suggestions. National and international could include such figures as Tim Peake, Greta Thunberg, Sir Tom Moore, politicians from this country and from other countries. You may find you will be adding names to this category as you go through the sessions.

Suggestions for a Pilots service / worship

This is an opportunity to share with the church what you have been doing in Pilots using the URCs CYW worship resource, Heroes and Villains. It is an opportunity to widen the discussions you may have had with the Pilots and hear what views the adult section of the church has on the theme. It may be, of course, that there still is no singing in our churches, but YouTube clips of hymns and worship songs could be used if you have the facility within your church. Do remember to check for license requirements.

Always remember worship is worship, it is not a performance and it is important that the Pilots should enjoy the experience of leading worship. It is not about getting everything right but about simply doing the best that they can.

Below is a suggested order of service, but the Pilots may want to devise their own or use elements of this. Bible readings – no edition specified, choose the one you think will be most accessible to the Pilots. The two most quoted are The Message and New Century Bible and the Dramatic Bible.

Genesis 1	In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ...
Nehemiah 8:10b	The joy of the Lord is my strength
Psalms 8	Creation Psalm
Psalms 46	God is a safe place to hide, a help when we need him ...
Psalms 104 (Creation)	Praise the Lord O my soul ...
Psalms 139	O Lord you have searched me...
Romans 15:1-2	Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, ...
Luke 12: 48b	With great power comes great responsibility...

1Cor 10: 31
Acts: 2:1–12 and 41
Philippians 4:13

Do all for the Lord ...
Pentecost
... Christ, who gives me strength.

All Aboard!

Call to worship Verses from Psalm 104: 32-34?

Hymn / song

Introduction to the theme

Prayers

Heroes and villains in fiction Quiz, perhaps

Hymn / song

Heroes and villains in the Bible

Bible reading Appropriate to the characters chosen

Daniel – (or other biblical character chosen)

Activity / dramatic reading

Prayers

Heroes and villains – in community

What's your carbon footprint? Quiz? Challenge?

Prayers

Hymn / song

Heroes and villains – in Us

Bible reading

Disciple or Apostle?

Prayers including the Pilots prayer

Hymn / song

All Ashore!