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## Lesson 11

### *The Strength of Humility*

#### TEACHER PREPARATION

##### KEY CONCEPTS

Humility is thinking more highly of others than of yourself. It is having an accurate understanding of your strengths and weaknesses.

Humility is demonstrated by putting the needs of others before your own.

Being humble is a sign of strength, not weakness.

##### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. name the qualities of a humble person.
2. know the antidote, or opposite, of humility.
3. realize why being humble is an important character trait.

##### KEY TERMS

**Antidotes:** opposites

**BAND-AID®:** a brand of small adhesive bandages used on cuts and abrasions

**Elusive:** difficult to achieve

**Humility:** a modest view of one's own importance

##### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Humility is an important character trait which is hard to teach. We want to encourage our students to realize humility is a powerful part of character, not one of weakness. When someone has a humble attitude, it doesn't mean they are not proud of their abilities, strengths and accomplishments. It means they recognize the power of using those abilities, strengths and accomplishments in service to others. Humility is something we need to teach, even though it can be difficult. The attitude of humility does not come naturally, so we need to help our students realize they need to choose to be humble.

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There are many ways to teach humility.

1. We need to model humility in our own lives.
2. Encourage your students – humility comes from a position of strength, belief and self-assurance.
3. Teach your students to understand we should never humiliate someone.
4. Help your students realize they are valuable because of who they are – not because of external possessions or because of their looks. They do not need to brag.
5. Expose your students to great examples of humility especially in people they would know.
6. Teach your students to have a servant heart.
7. Teach your students how to respond to comments with humility.
8. Teach your students there will be times when they need to be humble and apologize. (This will also be discussed in Lesson 15.)
9. Emphasize the importance of being thankful (as we discussed in Lesson 8.)

### **MATERIALS/PREPARATION**

1. In **Discovering the Lesson**, you will need a pen or if you have access to BAND-AID® strips or similar small bandage strips, provide 1 strip for every student.
2. In **Applying the Lesson**, you will need paper and pens/markers.
3. For **Going Deeper**, you will need a pencil and 5 (or more depending on the size of the group) slips of paper for each group member.

## **LESSON**

### **BEGINNING THE LESSON**

*[Say to the students:]* **The Map of Wonders seems to always be creating a mysterious challenge, leading the children on adventures. When we last heard from Dugan, Trish and Hector, they had discovered a stick, string and a riddle and they learned about the power of teamwork. Let’s see what is happening in the library today.**

### **READINESS (5 minutes)**

*[Read to the students:]* **Chapter 11 – The Golden Harp**

“What is she doing?” asked Dugan. “She just keeps sitting there

staring at the Map of Wonders.”

“I don’t know,” replied Trish.

“Do you think she wants to be left alone?” added Hector.

The Librarian turned and looked at the three friends. She smiled a sad sort of smile and nodded them over to join her.

The boys sat on her left, Trish and Edgar settled on her right. No one spoke.

The Map of Wonders seemed agitated. Small storms flashed on the distant land masses. A whole set of islands swirled around each other first in one direction and then another. Everything seemed vaguely unsettled and unsettling.

Edgar snuggled closer to Trish and Trish moved closer to the Librarian. The older woman put her arm around Trish and sighed.

“How are you, my dears?” she asked.

All three shrugged and continued to stare at the Map of Wonders.

“The diseased parts of the map aren’t going away, are they?” said Dugan.

“No, they are not,” whispered the Librarian so softly that they weren’t sure if she had said the words out loud or if they had just thought the same thing at the same time.

“What exactly is inside the dark, spidery masses?” asked Hector.

“They are full of life-robbing things that sap health and vitality from the Map of Wonders. They are called ***DreamBreakers***,” said the Librarian.

“What kind of things?” said Dugan.

“Oh, things like pride, bitterness, cynicism, and indifference,” answered the Librarian.

“What is cynicism?” asked Hector.

“It is when you can’t trust someone,” answered the Librarian.

“What can we do?” asked Trish.

“We need to put the antidotes, which are the opposites or correctives that help fight against the ***DreamBreakers***, into the dark places,” said the Librarian.

“How do we do that?” asked Dugan.

“Good question,” smiled the Librarian. “Let me ask you another question. What is the opposite of pride?”

“Huh?” stalled Dugan.

[Ask the class if they know the opposite meaning of pride. Then say]: **Let's see what Dugan says he thinks is the opposite of pride.)**

"I guess I'd have to say humility," said Dugan.

"Think I know the next question," offered Trish. "What is humility?"

A sparkle touched the corner of the Librarian's eye as a smile formed on her lips.

A haunting melody echoed down a book-lined corridor to their left.

"What a strange song," remarked Hector. "It makes you feel small and special at the same time."

"Yes, that's exactly how it makes me feel, too!" added Dugan.

They followed the melody around one corner after another. The music always seemed to be right around the next bend, but when they got there, it had moved away.

"Whatever humility turns out to be, I think elusiveness is going to be one of its traits," surmised Hector.

They eventually discovered the source of the music in a small, wood-paneled chamber covered with ornate carvings of every kind of musical instrument imaginable. A golden harp sat in the middle of the room surrounded by jewels, strings of pearls, leather-bound books of wisdom, unfurled yards of shimmering fabric and strangely shaped bottles of potions covered with magical markings.

They watched the strings move and vibrate, played by some unseen hand or, perhaps, the instrument itself. As they listened, the melody became more complex and confusing.

"I liked it when the main melody didn't have any competition," complained Hector. "It is tricky to hear the parts I like with everything else going on."

"So, humility is a song?" asked Dugan.

"I don't know if I'd go that far," said Hector. "But I think humility sets up a special melody inside those who possess it."

"How did you get so smart?" laughed Dugan.

The three continued to listen as the music created a feeling of humility in them.

"What did you learn about humility from your first music lesson in the library?" asked the Librarian as she entered the room.

"I realized life is not all about me! I have strengths, but it's important to care about the strengths and feelings of others," offered Dugan.

"And it is hard to hold on to," said Hector.

“It is surrounded by priceless things money cannot buy like wisdom and health,” added Trish.

“Quite true, and that is why it is called a ***DreamMaker***,” said the Librarian.

“But how does any of this help the Map of Wonders?” asked Dugan.

“How indeed!” replied the Librarian.

Hours later, during what passed for evening in the library, the three friends were watching the lights dim over the magical lands in the Map of Wonders. They felt as though they were waiting for something but they didn’t know what it might be.

A familiar melody began to echo down the corridors of the library. The music was so soft Trish, Dugan and Hector were not aware at first. But as the music grew, their hearts began to soar and they each turned toward the Map of Wonders.

“Let’s do it!” exclaimed Dugan.

“Agreed,” said Trish and Hector.

And so, they began to sing the Song of Humility over the Map of Wonders. Their words brought healing to the dark, diseased places and stars shown forth they had never seen.

“Well done,” whispered the Librarian as she stepped close. “I have waited such a long time to hear that song sung in this place again.”

### **EXPLORE** (10 minutes)

*[Say to the students:]* **The children were challenged by the Librarian to start learning about antidotes, or opposites, in order to combat what was causing a disturbance in the Map of Wonders. The Librarian said pride was one of the problems taking the health and vitality from the Map. Their adventure to discover the opposite of pride seemed to end with the word humility. What is humility? [Allow time for students to answer.]** Dugan said, “Humility makes me realize I am special, but life is not all about me! I have strengths, but it’s also important to care about the strengths and feelings of others.”

**Let’s think about the qualities of a humble person.** *[You may want to write these on the board. You should hear ideas like: If you are humble, you are courteous to people around you; you are willing to listen; you seek to learn from others; and you often think of the needs of others.]* **There is another**

word often connected to humility. It is the word empathy. Empathy means you care about how others feel and show them you care.

If you wear glasses, will you please take off your glasses? How is your vision? *[You should hear things are out of focus and blurry.]* Now, put your glasses back on. How is your vision? *[You should hear everything is clearer.]* That is how it is when you have empathy – you care about how others feel so it makes everything clearer. You may need to ask someone, “How do you feel?” in order to know because sometimes you can’t tell by looking at them. When you ask, it is important you really listen to their answer. When you are empathetic to someone in your life, you are truly being a “powerful” person because you care. There are a few old sayings about this – What do you think each saying means?

“Never look down on someone unless you are helping them up.” *[Don’t think of yourself as better than someone else.]*

“Don’t judge someone until you have walked a mile in their shoes.” *[You never really understand someone else’s life unless you experience their life with them.]*

We are going to learn more about how being a humble and empathetic person makes us stronger.

**DISCOVER** (15 minutes)

*[Say to the students:]* I want each one of you to pretend you have an injury somewhere on your body. When I come by your desk, you can tell me where your injury is located. *[No matter where the student tells you his or her “injury” is, you respond by saying “Okay” and draw a rectangle on the back of his or her hand to represent a BAND-AID®, or a small bandage strip. If you have access to small bandage strips, place an actual strip on the back of his or her hand. By the time you finish putting or drawing small bandages on everyone’s hands, you will probably have heard someone say, “We all said different places hurt – why did you put the bandages on our hands instead of where we said it hurt? That doesn’t make sense!” Your response can be: “Why? Everyone got a BAND-AID®, didn’t they?” Your students may say, “Yes, but how does it help if it is not where we needed it?”]*

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*[Say to your students:] Why did it matter where I put the bandage? [You should hear responses indicating: you didn't listen; you put the bandage where you wanted to; you didn't really care about where it hurt (their needs and concerns)]. How do we all realize what others need? Through being humble enough to have empathy and listen carefully — I didn't listen to you very well, did I? I did what I wanted to do with the bandages instead of listening to your needs. If I had listened carefully what would I have done? [You will probably hear, "You would have put the bandage strips where it would help because you would have cared enough to want to truly help us."]*

**APPLY** (20 minutes)

*[Say to the students:] Who is your "Humble Hero?" I want you to think of someone in your life who puts the needs of others first. Think of someone who often helps others, someone who is willing to do the hard jobs – even if no one notices. I am going to give you some time to draw a picture of your hero or write a description telling why that person is a "Humble Hero" to you.*

*[After your students have completed their drawings/writings, ask some to share why the person they chose is a "Humble Hero" to them. Use their descriptions to reinforce the value of humility in a person's life. Remind them being humble is not a weakness ... it is a sign of strength.]*

**SHARE** (5 minutes)

Encourage your students to take their drawings or writings and give them to their "Humble Hero" as a way of saying: "Thank you for being my hero."

**ENDING THE LESSON**

*[Say to the students:] We have learned a lot about the importance of being humble and the strength that comes from having empathy and thinking of the needs of others first. A humble person finds joy in caring for others. You recognized the strength of humility in your "Humble Hero." I hope you will continue to develop humility in your own lives.*

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**GOING DEEPER** (optional)

*[Say to the students:]* In the First Century, one of the early followers of Jesus was a man named Paul. Paul wrote a letter to some young Christians.

*[Ask a student to read the passage, or for younger students, read the passage to them.]*

**Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too** (*Philippians 2:3-4, New Living Translation*).

Sometimes, the best way we can practice humility is to praise or say something nice to another person. I have divided you into groups of six *[you can determine the number]*. I have chosen one of you in each group to be the group leader. The group leader is going to give each of you a small slip of paper for every person in the group. On one piece, write the name of someone in your group. Turn the paper over and then write one nice thing about that person. Choose another piece of paper, write the name of another person in your group, turn the paper over and write one nice thing about that person. Keep your comments private. You do not need to sign the papers. Continue until you have written something about each person in your group.

As you complete this task, I want the group leader to gather the papers and bring them to my desk. *[Quickly read over the comments and then choose the papers to give back to the group leader. If all of the comments are gracious, you can return them all or you can choose two or three comments for each person to give back to the group leader.]* **When the group leader returns to your group, they will read one of your names and then read out loud the comments your peers wrote about you. When they have read all of the comments about you, all you are to say is, "Thank you."** When each group has praised every person in your group, look up at me, so I will know you are finished.

*[While the groups are "praising," circulate through the room and assist any groups who may be off task. When all the groups have completed the task,*



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*ask the following questions and give one or more students the chance to respond to each question.]*

**Was this task hard or easy to do?**

**Why do you think it is hard for some people to praise others? Why do you think it is hard for some people to receive praise from others?**

**How did you feel when you were the one praising the other students? Was it easy, hard, fun, frustrating?**

**How did you feel when you were the one being praised? Did you feel joyful, uncomfortable, encouraged, embarrassed?**

**How do you think we could improve in “thinking of others as better than ourselves?”**

**Later, in the same letter, Paul says Jesus is our example of humility. We are told over and over in Scripture he cared deeply for others and treated them with kindness. He was a role model for how we should not think of ourselves as better than others, but should love and care for all people.**

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION**

Humility is an important character trait often hard to learn because its opposite trait, pride, is so often what children see in media and in their friends. Pride is easy to absorb. Humility is often misunderstood and confused with shame. We want your child to understand humility is a powerful part of character, not one of weakness. When someone has a humble attitude, it doesn't mean they cannot acknowledge their abilities, strengths and accomplishments. It means they recognize the power of using those abilities, strengths and accomplishments in service to others. The attitude of humility does not come naturally, but can be learned, especially when experienced in the life of someone your child respects. Humility starts with a choice to serve someone else.

### **Questions you might ask your child:**

1. Can you tell me the story your teacher read? (Hector, Dugan and Trish learned that humility comes when we realize life is not all about ourselves ... when we recognize we have strengths but it is important to care about the strengths and feelings of others.)
2. Do you remember what is the opposite of humility? (Pride)
3. Can you tell me what a "Humble Hero" is? (Someone your child respects who is humble.)
4. Who do you think is or could be your "Humble Hero?" (Explore possible heroes who invest in other people and serve them with humility.)

Parents, tell your child about someone you consider a "Humble Hero," either from when you were a child or in recent years. Explain the qualities making him or her a special person to you.

