

Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson #24 - Leaders & Heroes



Maggie says ...

In these difficult times, as our nation and the world pull together, it is more important than ever to understand our role as a citizen.

Today's lesson is about LEADERS & HEROES. As a dog, I have many heroes in my life. The crossing guard who makes my walk safe is one of my heroes. Thinking about today's world, I would put all of the doctors, nurses, and firstresponders on my list of heroes.

Sticky Situation: I love when someone reads to me. One of my favorite fairy tales is *Jack and the Beanstalk*. I have listened to that fairy tale many times. Every time I hear it, I wonder if Jack is a hero or a villain. Read the story below. After reading it yourself or having someone read the story to you, do you think Jack is a hero or a villain? Be prepared to support your point of view.

Jack and the Beanstalk

Jack is a very poor young boy who lives in a forest with his mother. Jack and his mother have a cow, whose milk provides them with most of what they need to eat or drink. One day, the cow is no longer able to give milk, so Jack's mom decides Jack should take the cow to the market and sell it in exchange for money and food.

As Jack heads toward the market, he meets a man who offers him beans - *magic* beans - that he says will grow very, very tall in only one night. Jack decides to give the man the cow in exchange for the magic beans.

When Jack arrives home, he tells his mother what he has done, expecting her to be as excited as he is. His mother, however, grows very angry and throws the beans out the window. She sends Jack to his room without dinner and tells him to go to bed. When Jack finally wakes up in the morning and looks out the window, he sees that the beans have grown into a very, very, very tall beanstalk.

A curious young boy, Jack decides to see where the beanstalk ends. He climbs the beanstalk to its very top where he sees a great castle. Jack enters the castle and sees a giant woman. He asks the woman for food. She gives him food but warns him that he must go before her husband - a Giant who eats children - arrives home. Jack agrees, but not before he sees that there are bags of gold in the house.

When Jack hears the Giant coming, he runs and hides in the oven. While in the oven, Jack listens to hear when the Giant has fallen asleep. Once he hears the Giant snoring, Jack sneaks out of the oven, grabs a bag of gold, and heads down the beanstalk.

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You can imagine how happy Jack's mother is when Jack shows her the bag of gold. With all that gold, Jack's mother realizes they will never have to go hungry again.

Jack decides he has not taken his last trip up the beanstalk and returns to the Giant's Castle two more times. On the first of these two trips, Jack steals a goose that lays golden eggs. On his second trip, Jack is stealing a golden harp, when suddenly, he hears the steps of the Giant and races to the beanstalk. The Giant knows that Jack has been breaking in and what he has stolen, so he chases after Jack. Jack reaches the beanstalk first and scrambles down as fast as he can. Once back on land, he cuts down the beanstalk, causing the Giant to fall to his death. With the Giant gone and all that wealth, Jack and his mother live happily ever after.

SO...Is Jack a Hero or a Villain? You decide!!!

Activity: Think about and discuss the following questions. Be prepared to support your answer.

1. Are all "heroes" leaders?
2. Are all "leaders" heroes?
3. Who are some people you consider heroes from history? Why?
4. Who are some people you consider leaders from history? Why?
5. Now, let's think about today. Who are your heroes, and why? How could you let them know that you think they are a hero? Would you write a letter? Make a poster, or draw a picture? Get your teacher to post your work on the bulletin board or door in your classroom, or post it somewhere in your home. That makes you a hero, too!