

Leader Devotional

Jesus Builds the Team, John 1:35-51

Welcome to the Hero Hotline: Called Together to Serve God VBS! Thank you for serving as we lead our Heroes to answer the call to work together and serve God. We'll hear stories from Scripture about a supporting cast of Bible Heroes who work together to bring peace, build each other up, and share the great story of God's love.

The theme verse for Hero Hotline VBS is called the Hotline Verse and we and all of the young Heroes attending VBS will be saying it a lot throughout our time together. It's from Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter 14, verse 19. I'll say it, then you can repeat it with me. Let's go! "So, let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up." Let's try it together now! *(Repeat with your leaders.)*

And, every session, we'll also be focusing on a key lesson that we'll call our Hotline Tip. The Hotline Tip for this session is "Heroes are called to... Follow Jesus!" Let's try that as a call and response. I'll start with the first part then we'll all say "Follow Jesus!" together. Let's try it!

Leader: **Heroes are called to**
All: **Follow Jesus!**

Great job! In this session, we'll learn about being called to follow Jesus from a story found in the Gospel of John, where the very first disciples or Heroes are called by Jesus himself to follow him. As we and our young Heroes experience this story of various disciples answering the call of Jesus, we'll all be invited to consider how we will respond to this call in our own lives. And as part of our answer to this call, we'll discover that the more we learn about Jesus and who he is, the better we can show God's love to others.

Some of us may think that the life of a disciple is all about learning what it is we should do, not do, or what we should believe. And that is part of it, but disciples or Heroes are called to... Follow Jesus! And to do that well, we need to learn about who it is we are following. As you encounter the story of Jesus calling the disciples today, notice Jesus' interaction with each new disciple he encounters. What does he ask them? What does he tell them? What are the disciples' responses to Jesus?

Take a moment and reflect on what you sense Jesus may be asking you today. How will you respond to Jesus' question? What question might you need to ask Jesus today? How do you hope Jesus responds?

God who calls us to follow,
Thank you for Jesus and thank you for the invitation to answer the call and to follow him. Help us to listen for this call and answer it each moment of this day. In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Bible Story

Jesus Builds the Team
John 1:35-51

Hotline Verse

So let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up.
(Romans 14:19)

Hotline Tip

Heroes are called to...
Follow Jesus!

Leader Devotional

Shiphrah, Puah, and Miriam: God's Wonder Women, Exodus 1:8-2:10

Welcome back to Hero Hotline: Called Together to Serve God VBS! Thank you for continuing to serve as we lead our Heroes to answer the call to work together and serve God. In this session, we'll hear a story about a small team of Bible Heroes who work together to make it possible for one of the best-known Bible Heroes to fulfill his mission.

To get us started, let's refresh ourselves on the Hotline Verse. Who remembers what it is? Great! Let's say it together. It's Romans 14:19. Ready? Let's go! "So, let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up." Let's try it one more time! *(Repeat with your leaders.)*

Remember that every session, we'll be focusing on a key lesson that we call our Hotline Tip. The Hotline Tip for this session is "Heroes are called to... Help Others!" Let's try saying it all together today, "Heroes are called to... Help Others!"

Great Job! In this session, we'll learn about being called to Help Others from a story found in the Old Testament Book of Exodus, where a team of "Wonder Women" shows us how anyone, not just powerful people, can answer God's call and help others. God's "Wonder Women" include two midwives named Shiphrah and Puah, Moses' mother and his sister, Miriam, and Pharaoh's daughter, who courageously do their part, in spite of Pharaoh's wishes, to help the baby Moses live and grow to become the Bible story hero many of us know him to be.

Most of us would probably say that we want to help others, maybe even that we enjoy helping others. But answering the call to help others is not always easy or without risk. In today's story, our "Wonder Women" have to make the choice to stand with God and on the side of love and help the baby, Moses, even when the leader (Pharaoh) and the law of the land (Pharaoh's decrees) would have had them do otherwise. Take a moment and consider if you've ever had to take a stand against leaders or rules in order to help someone. Reflect on how you made your decision, on how you involved God in your process, and what the outcome was. If you've never been in this position, consider how you might approach it, how you'd seek God in the process, and if there are trusted friends you could turn to for guidance and support as you discern. How can you be a trusted friend or support to others (even our young Heroes) who may be faced with similar obstacles when answering God's call to help others?

God who gives us help and invites us to join in,
Thank you for the example of your "Wonder Women" in the story from Exodus.
Please speak to us today and inspire us to answer your call to help others.

In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Bible Story

Shiphrah, Puah, and
Miriam: God's Wonder
Women
Exodus 1:8-2:10

Hotline Verse

So let's strive for the
things that bring peace
and the things that build
each other up.
(Romans 14:19)

Hotline Tip

Heroes are called to...
Help Others!

Leader Devotional

Jethro Mentors Moses, Exodus 18

Welcome back to Hero Hotline: Called Together to Serve God VBS! Thank you for all you've been doing as we work together to serve and lead our Heroes to answer the call to serve God. In this session, we'll hear a story about an older hero advising a younger hero to work together with others to lead a whole community and follow God's direction en route to the Promised Land.

Let's get started with our Hotline Verse. Let's say it together! "So, let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up."

Our key lesson or the Hotline Tip for this session is "Heroes are called to... Work Together!" Let's work together and say it, "Heroes are called to... Work Together!"

Great working together! In this session, we'll learn about being called to work together from another story found in the Old Testament Book of Exodus, where an all-grown-up Moses is visited by his father-in-law, Jethro, and receives some practical, but life-changing advice to involve others in leading the community of Israelites through the desert and to the land God has promised. Through this story, we'll see that even the best-known Bible heroes do better when they accept the help and guidance of others. We'll be invited to consider how we can both accept and give help as we work together with God, and how we grow stronger as we turn toward God and others and away from going it alone.

Some of us probably consider ourselves team players. Others of us may be more comfortable living our lives solo. And some might even consider asking for and/or accepting help a sign of weakness. Even though there are certainly some jobs that are best done by one person, we all come to places in our lives where we need help from God and from others. Take a moment and consider what your relationship with asking for and accepting help is. How do you feel about yourself when you find yourself needing others? How do you feel about the people who help you? Do you like working with others or is it something you avoid? Ask God to show you where you might need to grow in this area and to help you see when you might need to be the person joining in and helping others.

God who walks and works with us,
Thank you for today's lesson on working together. As we work together to serve and share with our young Heroes, help us find joy in the ways you appear in the faces of helpful friends and family.

In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Bible Story

Jethro Mentors Moses
Exodus 18

Hotline Verse

So let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up.
(Romans 14:19)

Hotline Tip

Heroes are called to...
Work Together!

Leader Devotional

The Magnificent Magi, Matthew 2:1-12

Welcome back to Hero Hotline: Called Together to Serve God VBS! Thank you again for hearing and answering God's call to work together to serve and lead our Heroes to answer the call to serve God. In this session, we'll hear a story about an ensemble of studious heroes who listened to God and followed God's directions right to the baby Jesus and then home by another way.

Let's start with our Hotline Verse, but let's do it differently. This time, listen as I say it. "So, let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up." Now, I'll say it one more time. Just keep listening. "So, let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up."

Great job listening! And speaking of listening, our key lesson or the Hotline Tip for this session is "Heroes are called to... Listen to God!" Let's try that together, "Heroes are called to... Listen to God!"

Excellent! In this session, we'll learn about being called to Listen to God from a familiar story found in the Gospel of Matthew about a team of well-practiced listeners, the "Magnificent Magi," also known as the three wise men. This story will help us understand that the call of God can come in many ways. And as we experience the journey of the magi, we'll be invited to consider all the ways God reaches out to us and how we can better listen for and hear God's call in our own lives.

If asked, many of us would probably say that we've never heard God speak "out loud" to us and that may be so. But, there are many ways besides speaking out loud that God uses to communicate with us. We might just need to put the time and effort into learning to listen. In this session's story, the magi received God's direction by paying attention to what they saw in the night sky, observing a special star, and listening to a warning given in a nighttime dream. Consider what your relationship with listening to God might be. Have you experienced listening to God? How would you like to hear from God? What are some ways you have heard from God? What are some new ways of listening to God you might want to try and practice? Invite God to guide you in answering the call to listen to God.

God who speaks to us,
Thank you for the example of the magi and for all the ways we might listen for your voice.
Help us to hear your voice and see your face in each person we spend time with during this time together.

In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Bible Story

The Magnificent Magi
Matthew 2:1-12

Hotline Verse

So let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up.
(Romans 14:19)

Hotline Tip

Heroes are called to...
Listen to God!

Leader Devotional

Unexpected Heroes Give Paul a Basket Ride, Acts 9:1-25

Here we are again at Hero Hotline: Called Together to Serve God VBS! Thank you so much for answering God's call to work together to serve and lead our Heroes to answer the call to serve God. In this session, we'll hear a story about a group of heroes who show grace and help a newly converted Bible hero who only days before was set out to persecute followers of Jesus. In this story, he's called "Saul," but he's the same person most of us know as Paul, credited with writing many of the letters found in the New Testament.

We've been saying our Hotline Verse multiple times throughout our VBS. Let's see if we can say it by memory, without any prompts. Here we go! "So, let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up." Excellent! I hope this verse will stay with us all as we finish up our time at Hero Hotline and continue to live the lessons each day of our lives.

Speaking of lessons, it's time for our Hotline Tip for this session. It's "Heroes are called to... Show Grace!" Let's try that together, "Heroes are called to... Show Grace!"

Thank you! In this session, we'll learn about being called to show grace from a story found in the Book of Acts about group of heroes in the early church who show grace to Saul/Paul, and provide him with a basket ride to safety. As we get involved in this story, we'll see that Jesus' disciples in Damascus were afraid to help Saul/Paul but moved beyond that fear to answer God's call to show grace. This made it possible for him to begin sharing the good news about Jesus with people in many places. Through this, we will consider the invitation to receive God's grace for ourselves and to share that grace with others, just like the disciples in our story did with Paul.

One of the people who played a major role in spreading the good news of God's grace through Jesus may not have made it very far without the grace of God and the grace of others. I wonder if any one of those folks lowering Saul/Paul in that basket to safety had any idea how much love and grace would be shared as a result of what may have seemed like one small act. Can you think of a time when you've received grace from God or from other people? What was the result? Can you think of a time when you've shown grace to others? How did you see God move through that action? Ask God to help you see moments of grace each day and to give you the ability to show grace to others.

God of grace,

Thank you for Jesus, Paul, and the example of these early Christians who answered the call to show grace. Thank you for each of these leaders, who just by showing up have shown grace each day here at the Hero Hotline. They are truly heroes.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.



Bible Story

Unexpected Heroes Give
Paul a Basket Ride
Acts 9:1-25

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