

PORTRAITS OF COURAGE



STORIES OF
BAPTIST HEROES



**Curriculum and
Teaching Resource**



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About the Book & Author

Portraits of Courage is designed specifically for older children and youth to discover the stories of remarkable Baptist heroes. This collection of inspiring biographies introduces readers to men and women who made a difference through their faith and courage. These Baptist heroes come from various countries and centuries, showcasing the diverse history and global influence of Baptists. Each chapter offers an engaging look into the lives of these leaders, who have made significant contributions to the Baptist tradition.

By focusing on individual stories, *Portraits of Courage* helps readers understand how these heroes stood up for their beliefs, served others, and worked for justice and freedom. The book not only teaches Baptist history but also encourages students to think about how they can live out their faith in meaningful ways. Whether serving in missions, advocating for justice, or leading in churches, these Baptist heroes provide examples of how each person can make an impact.

Rev. Julie Whidden Long, author of *Portraits of Courage*, is the pastor of First Baptist Church of Christ in Macon, Georgia. She has previously served in various ministerial roles, including as minister of children and families and associate pastor at FBCX Macon. Rev. Long holds both a Bachelor of Arts in Christianity and History and a Master of Divinity from Mercer University.

Below is a full listing of the chapters included in *Portraits of Courage*:

- Introduction: What Makes a Baptist Hero?
- John Smyth: Baptist Trailblazer
- John Clarke: Baptist Freedom Fighter
- Ann Hasseltine Judson: Baptist Missionary Pioneer
- Jesse Mercer: Baptist Denominational Leader
- Lottie Moon: Baptist Teacher
- William Knibb: Baptist Liberator
- Louise (Lulu) Fleming: Baptist Missionary Doctor
- Walter Rauschenbusch: Baptist Prophet
- Martin Luther King Jr.: Baptist Dreamer
- Addie Davis: Baptist Pastor
- Jimmy Carter: Baptist Peacemaker
- Leena Lavanya: "Baptist Mother Teresa"
- Theo Angelov: Persecuted Baptist
- Olu Menjay: Baptist Rebuilder
- Conclusion: What Makes a Baptist Hero?

How to Use

This curriculum and teaching resource is designed to guide leaders through using *Portraits of Courage* to explore the lives of Baptist heroes with students in congregational settings. Each chapter includes discussion questions that encourage students to think critically about the stories, and hands-on activities to deepen their engagement.

Teachers may begin by reading the chapter aloud or having students read together. After reading, use the discussion questions to facilitate conversation, prompting students to share their thoughts and insights. Next, guide the class through the activities, which may include crafts, role-playing, or service projects that connect to the chapter's themes.

Leaders also have flexibility in how to approach this resource. If you wish to study only one specific Baptist hero, you can focus on that chapter alone without needing to follow a set order. Alternatively, you can choose multiple chapters to study over time, selecting the Baptist heroes most relevant to your students or congregational focus.

About the Publisher

The Baptist History & Heritage Society (BHHS) is a nonprofit organization of Baptist scholars, clergy, laity, students and congregations committed to helping Baptists discover, conserve, assess and share their history. BHHS' vision is to bridge the worlds of the academy and the congregation while sharing the stories of Baptists.

Founded in 1938, BHHS is comprised of members located throughout North America, including American Baptists, Canadian Baptists, Cooperative Baptists, National Baptists, Primitive Baptists, Seventh Day Baptists, Southern Baptists and many others. Members also include several dozen Baptists in other countries.

Learn more about Baptist History & Heritage Society and how you can support our work of developing resources like *Portraits of Courage*. Your gifts help us in this vital mission to share the Baptist story. Choose a one-time gift or set up a recurring donation to sustain our ministry educating and resourcing Baptists worldwide. Donors who contribute \$50 or more will receive a one-year subscription to the *Baptist History & Heritage Journal*, a national scholarly publication examining four centuries of Baptist history.

Invest in Baptist identity! Give today and make a lasting impact at www.thebhhs.org/give.

Special Thanks to CBF Heartland and Executive Director Jeff Langford for partnering to produce this curriculum and teaching resource for *Portraits of Courage: Stories of Baptist Heroes*. CBF Heartland is a Baptist network welcoming churches and individuals from 12 Midwestern states. CBF Heartland expands the impact of Christians and churches as a connector for community and collaboration, convenor for inspiration and identity, and catalyst for leadership and learning. Learn more about CBF Heartland at www.cbfheartland.org.

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT MAKES A BAPTIST HERO?

Questions for Conversation

- What does it mean to be a hero?
- What are some qualities that make someone a Baptist hero?
- Why is freedom so important to Baptists?
- *Portraits of Courage* mentions that Baptists come from many different backgrounds. How does diversity make the Baptist family stronger?
- Why is it good to have people with different backgrounds in our congregation?
- What does it mean that Baptists believe in “the priesthood of all believers”?
- What is “religious liberty,” and why is it important to Baptists?
- Why do you think God calls people to courageously stand up for others, even when it’s hard?
- Can you think of someone who has stood up for others in your life?
- How can we be Baptist heroes today?

Suggested Activities

Create a Hero Poster: Have the students create a poster about what makes a hero. They can write down traits like bravery, faith, and kindness and draw pictures of things heroes do to help others. Include the four freedoms of Baptist heroes.

Hero Role-Play: Split the students into groups and give them real-life scenarios where they can practice being everyday heroes. For example, one group might role-play standing up for a classmate being treated unfairly, while another group could act out helping someone who is feeling left out or offering assistance to a person in need.

Baptist Hero “Heads Up”: Write names of each Baptist hero on an index card. Each student draws a card and holds it to their forehead. Other students describe the hero while the student guesses who it is.

JOHN SMYTH

BAPTIST TRAILBLAZER



Questions for Conversation

- Why is John Smyth called a “trailblazer”?
- What does it mean to “blaze a trail” for others?
- John Smyth showed courage by advocating for believer’s baptism. What is that, and why was it important to him?
- John Smyth and his followers had to leave England because of their beliefs. What is religious freedom and why do you think people should have the right to worship the way they believe?
- How would you feel if you weren’t allowed to worship the way you wanted?
- John Smyth helped start the first Baptist church. What do you think it was like for him and his followers to start something new?
- Have you ever had to start something new that was hard?
- Can you think of a time when standing up for something was difficult but important?
- What can we learn from John Smyth about following our beliefs even when it’s hard?
- How can you stand up for what you believe is right, even if it’s not popular?

Suggested Activities

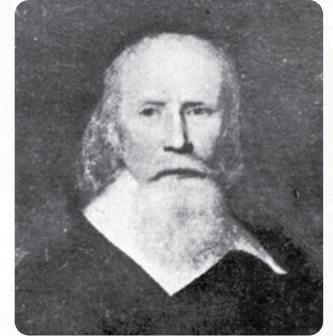
Baptism Symbol Craft: Provide clay or Play-Doh and let students mold symbols of baptism (such as a cross or a water droplet). Talk about what baptism means and why it was important to John Smyth.

Baptism Discussion Circle: Create a discussion circle where students share their thoughts on baptism. Encourage them to ask questions and discuss what makes baptism an important part of their faith.

Church Leadership Role-Play: Assign students roles as church leaders. One student presents a new idea for the church, and the others respond with different perspectives—some positive, some hesitant. Together, they discuss and work through their differences, emphasizing teamwork and faith, similar to how John Smyth’s courageous community worked together to start a new church.

JOHN CLARKE

BAPTIST FREEDOM FIGHTER



Questions for Conversation

- What does it mean to be a “freedom fighter” and why was John Clarke called this?
- John Clarke courageously advocated for religious freedom. How did he help people have the right to worship as they chose?
- Why is it important that no one is forced to follow a specific religion?
- When John Clarke was thrown in jail for his beliefs, he didn’t give up. What kept him going?
- How can we stay strong when things are tough?
- What does the story of Obadiah Holmes being whipped tell us about standing up for what we believe?
- Can you think of someone who courageously stood up for what was right, even though it was hard?
- John Clarke worked with the government in Rhode Island to create a place where everyone could have religious freedom. Why was this important?
- How can we be like John Clarke by helping others have freedom and rights?
- What can you do at school or in your community to stand up for others?

Suggested Activities

Freedom Mural: On a large sheet of paper, have students work together to create a mural that represents freedom. They can draw symbols like open doors, birds, and churches to show how John Clarke fought for religious freedom.

Historical Skit: Create a short skit where students act out John Clarke’s story, including his imprisonment and courageous fight for religious freedom. Discuss how his bravery helped create more freedom for others. Include role-play prompts.

Letter to a Leader: Have students write a letter to a modern leader, encouraging them to stand up for freedom just like John Clarke did. Discuss how they can advocate for freedom and fairness in their own communities.

ANN HASSELTINE JUDSON BAPTIST MISSIONARY PIONEER



Questions for Conversation

- Why do you think Ann Judson wanted to become a missionary?
- What does it mean to be “called” by God to do something?
- Ann Judson had to make many courageous choices, like leaving her home to go to Burma. How do you think she felt about these choices? What would it take for you to leave home for something you believed in?
- Ann helped translate the Bible into the Burmese language. Why was this important?
- How would you feel if you couldn’t read the Bible in your own language?
- Ann Judson faced many hardships, including losing her children and her husband being imprisoned. How did her faith help her stay strong?
- What can we do when our faith is tested by hard times?
- Even though the Burmese emperor didn’t like Christianity, Ann and Adoniram kept telling people about Jesus. Why didn’t they give up?
- Have you ever had to keep going even when things were hard?
- What can we learn from Ann Judson about being courageous and sharing our faith with others? How can you share God’s love with people in your life?

Suggested Activities

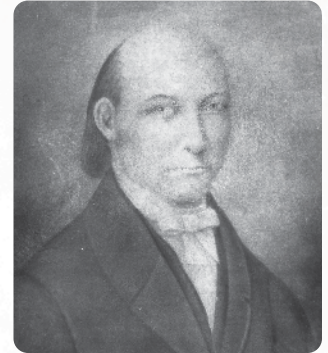
Bible Translation Activity: Give the students a simple Bible verse in a different language (like using an online translation tool). Then, talk about the importance of translating the Bible into different languages, just like Ann did.

Letter to a Missionary: Have the students write a letter to a missionary in your denomination, encouraging them to stay courageous and sharing what they’ve learned from Ann’s story.

Language Learning Game: Introduce students to a few simple words in Burmese (such as “hello” and “thank you”). Then, have a fun quiz where students try to remember and use the words, learning about how Ann Judson had to learn a new language to communicate God’s love.

JESSE MERCER

BAPTIST DENOMINATIONAL LEADER



Questions for Conversation

- Jesse Mercer believed that education was important for pastors and church leaders. Why do you think education matters?
- How can learning more help us better serve God?
- Jesse Mercer helped churches work together by forming associations. Why is it important for churches to work together?
- What are some ways we can help others in our church or community?
- Jesse Mercer started a Baptist school that later became Mercer University. Why do you think he thought it was important to start a school?
- Jesse helped create a new hymnal so people could sing in worship. Why do you think music is important in church?
- What are some of your favorite songs to sing in worship?
- Jesse Mercer spent much of his life helping others learn about God and work together for missions. How can we follow his example?
- Even when Jesse Mercer's health was failing, he still wanted to help the church. How does this show his commitment to God's work?
- How can you stay committed to serving God, no matter what challenges come your way?

Suggested Activities

Sing a Hymn: Choose a hymn from Jesse Mercer's hymnal or another classic hymn. Have the students sing it and talk about why hymns are important in worship.

Mission Project Planning: Divide students into small groups and give each group a scenario where they are tasked with planning a mission project, such as a community food drive or a church fundraiser. Each group must discuss and decide how they will organize the project, who they need to work with, and how they can involve other churches or community groups. Afterward, have them present their plans to the class, focusing on the importance of collaboration, as Jesse Mercer emphasized in his work with associations.

Write a Letter: Write a letter to another church, telling them about your worship service and children's/youth group. Ask them questions about their church. Discuss why it is important for churches to learn about each other and serve God together.

LOTTIE MOON BAPTIST TEACHER



Questions for Conversation

- Lottie Moon felt called by God to go to China. Why do you think she was willing to leave her home and go to another country?
- How can we listen for God's calling in our lives?
- At first, Lottie Moon thought she was better than the people in China, but she changed her mind. What helped her understand the people better?
- Why is it important to respect and learn from people who are different from us?
- Lottie Moon used her teaching skills to help people in China. How do you think teaching can help spread God's love?
- Lottie was famous for making cookies to build relationships with children in China. Why do you think small acts of kindness like this can help people see God's love?
- What small acts of kindness can you do to show God's love to others?
- Lottie believed she could serve God just as well as men. Why do you think this was important for her?
- Why is it important to support missionaries located around the world who are serving God and others?
- How can you help support missions in your church?

Suggested Activities

Chinese Lantern Craft: Have students create paper lanterns and decorate them with words or symbols that represent light and hope. Discuss how Lottie Moon shared the light and hope of Christ with children in China.

Missionary Letter Writing: Have students write letters to mission personnel serving today. They can encourage them and share what they've learned from Lottie Moon about being a missionary.

Chinese Culture Exploration: Show students some images or objects from Chinese culture (like maps, traditional clothing, or art). Discuss how Lottie Moon had to learn about a new culture to teach people about Jesus. Learn about how Christians in China live their faith.

WILLIAM KNIBB

BAPTIST LIBERATOR



Questions for Conversation

- William Knibb helped free more than 300,000 enslaved people in Jamaica. Why do you think he fought so hard for their freedom?
- Why is it important to stand up for people who are being mistreated?
- When William Knibb first went to Jamaica, he taught children in school. Why do you think education was important to him?
- How can education help people have better lives?
- William faced danger when he courageously spoke out against slavery, but he didn't stop. What kept him going, even when it was hard?
- How can we be brave like William when we need to stand up for others?
- After the enslaved people were freed, William helped them buy land so they could build homes and grow crops. Why was this important?
- How can we help others not just survive, but thrive?
- William Knibb worked to show that every person is valuable. How can we show others that they are valuable to God?
- What are some ways you can treat others with respect and love, no matter who they are?

Suggested Activities

Justice Quilt: Each student gets a square piece of paper to draw or write about what justice means to them. Put all the pieces together to create a "justice quilt" that shows their understanding of fairness and equality.

Justice Discussion Circle: Organize a discussion circle where students talk about what justice means. Ask them to think of situations where people are treated unfairly and what they can do to help, inspired by William Knibb's fight for freedom.

Freedom Poem: Have students write a haiku or other short poem about freedom or justice. Encourage them to think about why freedom is important and how it can change lives, just as it did for the people William Knibb helped. Note: A haiku has three lines comprised of 5 syllables (Line 1), 7 syllables (Line 2), 5 syllables (Line 3).

LOUISE (LULU) FLEMING BAPTIST MISSIONARY DOCTOR



Questions for Conversation

- Louise Fleming started life as a slave and later became a missionary. What do you think gave her the courage to follow God's call to go to Africa?
- How can God's call change someone's life?
- Louise was the first African-American woman to serve as a missionary to Africa. Why do you think this was important for her and for others?
- How can we make a difference for others by being the first to do something brave?
- Louise wanted to help women in Africa learn about God. Why do you think she focused on helping women?
- How can helping one group of people, like women, make a big difference in a community?
- Louise went to medical school so she could help the people of Africa in new ways. Why do you think it was important for her to become a doctor?
- How can learning new skills help us serve others better?
- Louise cared for the health of people's bodies and also their hearts by teaching them about Jesus. Why do you think it's important to take care of both?
- Louise Fleming became a leader, even though she faced challenges because of her background. What can we learn from her about overcoming obstacles?

Suggested Activities

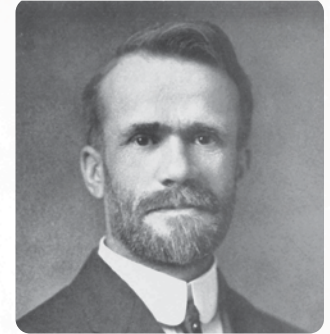
Missionary First-Aid Kit: Have students create small "first-aid kits" (with items like bandages, tissues, etc.) and discuss how Louise Fleming used her medical skills to help people. You could donate the kits to a local shelter or mission.

Hospital Prayer Cards: Have students make prayer cards for people in hospitals or nursing homes in your church, just like Louise cared for the sick. Encourage them to pray for those who are ill or in need of healing.

Healing Prayer Circle: Organize a prayer circle where students pray for people who are sick or in need of help, just like Louise did. Discuss how we can help heal people spiritually and physically through prayer and care.

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH

BAPTIST PROPHET



Questions for Conversation

- Walter Rauschenbusch lived in a poor neighborhood in New York and saw people struggling. Why do you think he decided to help?
- How can seeing the struggles of others inspire us to act?
- Walter worked in a place called “Hell’s Kitchen,” where many people didn’t have much money and faced difficult living conditions. How do you think he shared God’s love with people in such a tough place?
- What are some ways we can share God’s love with people who are struggling?
- Walter believed that Christians should work to fix unfair systems that hurt people, like poverty. Why is it important to fix the causes of problems, not just the symptoms?
- Can you think of something unfair in your community that you’d like to help fix?
- Walter wrote about the “social gospel,” which means that Christians should care for others and make the world a better place now. Why do you think this is important?
- Walter believed that God cares about justice and fairness for all people. How can we show that we care about justice too?
- What’s one way you can stand up for someone who is being treated unfairly or speak out against unequal treatment or unfair rules?
- Walter’s work helped inspire many people to fight for justice. How can we be like him by helping others in our own communities?

Suggested Activities

Justice Wall: On a large sheet of paper, have students write down things they think are unfair in the world (like hunger or bullying). Then, work together to write ways they can help bring fairness and justice.

Social Gospel Mural: Have students create a large mural showing ways Christians can help others in their everyday lives. They can draw pictures of feeding the hungry, helping the sick, or standing up for those treated unfairly.

Community Service Plan: Work with students to create a simple plan for a community service project, such as collecting food for a local pantry or writing cards for people in need. Talk about how Walter Rauschenbusch wanted Christians to help others in real, practical ways.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BAPTIST DREAMER



Questions for Conversation

- Martin Luther King Jr. courageously believed in a dream of equality for all people. What was his dream, and why was it so important?
- How can having a dream for a better world make a difference?
- Dr. King used peaceful protests to fight for civil rights. Why do you think he chose nonviolence?
- How can we respond peacefully when someone treats us unfairly?
- Dr. King believed that all people, no matter their skin color, should be treated the same. Why is it important that everyone has equal rights?
- What are some ways we can help others feel included and valued?
- Dr. King worked hard to make changes in laws that were unfair. Why is it important to speak up when we see something wrong in the world?
- How can you speak up if you see someone being treated unfairly?
- Dr. King was a courageous pastor who used his faith to guide his actions. How do you think his belief in God helped him lead the Civil Rights Movement?
- Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech inspired many people to work for justice and peace. How can we keep his dream alive today?

Suggested Activities

Dream Collage: Have students create a collage or poster of their dreams for a better world. They can cut out pictures from magazines or draw things they would like to see, such as peace, fairness, or kindness to others.

I Have a Dream Speech: Play an audio clip or read a portion of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Ask the students to think about what dreams they have for their community or school and let them share their own "dream speeches."

Dream Journal: Give students a small journal to write about their own dreams for how they can make the world a better place. Encourage them to think about what they can do to help others, just like Dr. King worked for justice.

ADDIE DAVIS BAPTIST PASTOR



Questions for Conversation

- Addie Davis was the first woman to be ordained as a pastor by a Southern Baptist church. Why do you think it was a big deal for her to become a pastor?
- Addie Davis faced challenges because she was a woman, but she believed God called her to preach. Why is it important to follow God's call, even if others don't agree?
- Some people didn't believe women should be pastors, but Addie Davis kept going. How do you think her faith helped her overcome obstacles?
- How can faith help us be strong when we face challenges?
- Addie believed that God gave everyone the ability to serve in different ways. Why is it important to recognize that everyone has different gifts?
- What gifts has God given you to help others?
- Addie Davis wanted to show that women could lead just as well as men. Why do you think it's important for both men and women to have equal opportunities in the church?
- How can we make sure everyone feels welcome to serve and lead in our church?
- By becoming a pastor, Addie Davis courageously opened the door for other women to follow in her footsteps. How can we encourage others to follow their dreams and answer God's call?
- How can you help someone else believe in themselves and their abilities?

Suggested Activities

Create a Pastor's Stole: Provide fabric markers and plain white paper or cloth, and have students design their own "pastor's stole" by drawing symbols of faith, like crosses, doves, or hearts, to represent how Addie Davis served God.

Women in Ministry Timeline: Create a timeline of important moments for women in ministry, starting with Addie Davis's ordination. Let students add other women from history or their own church who have made a difference.

Letter to a Leader: Have students write a letter to a woman church leader thanking them for their service, just like Addie Davis served her church. Encourage them to think about the challenges of being a leader and how we can support those in charge.

JIMMY CARTER

BAPTIST PEACEMAKER



Questions for Conversation

- Jimmy Carter believed in promoting peace around the world. Why do you think peace was so important to him?
- How can we work for peace in our own lives?
- Jimmy Carter was a United States president and used his position to help others. How do you think his faith influenced the way he led as president?
- How can we use the roles we have, no matter how big or small, to help others?
- After serving as president, Jimmy Carter continued to work for peace and help build homes for people in need. Why do you think he didn't stop helping others, even after he left office?
- What's one way you can help people in need in your community?
- President Carter believed that his Baptist faith called him to help bring peace and justice. How can our faith help us see where there is injustice in the world?
- What can you do to make the world more fair and peaceful?
- Even though President Carter had a powerful position, he believed in helping the most vulnerable. What does this tell us about how we should treat others, no matter who they are?
- How can you treat others with kindness and fairness, just like President Carter did?

Suggested Activities

Peacemakers Game: Play the “yes and” game, where students build on each other's ideas without arguing. For example, one student might say, “Let's start a new club!” and the next responds, “Yes, and let's invite everyone to join!” Use this activity to discuss how President Carter promoted peace and why peacemaking is important in our lives.

World Peace Prayer: Create a prayer map of the world, and have students place stickers or draw symbols on countries where they want to pray for peace. Lead a group prayer for global peace and justice, just like President Carter worked for peace.

Letter to a Leader: Ask students to write a letter to a local leader (like a mayor or pastor) asking them to support a cause that promotes peace or justice in the community, just as President Carter spoke up for what was right.

LEENA LAVANYA

“BAPTIST MOTHER TERESA”



Questions for Conversation

- Leena Lavanya courageously dedicated her life to helping the poor and those in need. Why do you think helping those living in poverty was so important to her?
- How can we follow her example by helping those who have less than us?
- Leena started ministries for orphans, widows, and people with leprosy. Why is it important to care for people who are often forgotten by others?
- How can you show love and kindness to people who might feel left out?
- Leena was known for showing God’s love through her actions. How do you think helping others can show them God’s love?
- What are some actions you can take to show love to others?
- Leena believed that everyone, no matter their situation, should be treated with dignity and respect. Why is this so important for Christians to remember?
- How can you treat others with dignity and respect in your daily life?
- Leena’s work has inspired others to care for the poor and sick. How can we inspire others by the way we serve and help people?
- What’s one thing you can do this week to serve someone in need?

Suggested Activities

Care Package Assembly: Create small care packages (like hygiene kits or snack bags) for a local shelter or mission. Let the students pack the items and include a note of encouragement. Discuss how Leena helped people with both physical and spiritual needs.

Kindness Journal: Create a journal where students can write down or draw acts of kindness they perform or observe during the week. At the next class, have them share how they either helped someone or witnessed someone showing kindness, just as Leena Lavanya showed kindness to those in need.

Prayer for the Forgotten: Lead a prayer session where students pray for people who might be overlooked or left out, just like Leena cared for orphans, widows, and people with leprosy. Encourage students to think about who they can help in their own communities.

THEO ANGELOV PERSECUTED BAPTIST



Questions for Conversation

- Theo Angelov was persecuted for his faith during a time of Communist rule in Bulgaria. Why do you think he continued to follow Jesus even when it was dangerous?
- How can we stay strong in our faith even when others don't understand or agree?
- Theo's father was put in prison because of his Christian beliefs. How do you think that affected Theo's decision to stay committed to his faith?
- Have you ever had to stand up for something you believed in, even when it was hard?
- Theo worked to help other Christians in Bulgaria, even when it was illegal to do so. Why do you think he took such big risks?
- What does this teach us about being courageous for our beliefs?
- Theo believed that God's love was more important than the government's rules. Why is it important to follow God, even when the world tells us to do something different?
- Theo showed that even in difficult times, we can keep our faith and trust in God. How does his story encourage you to stay faithful in tough situations?
- Theo's commitment to God's people, even in the face of persecution, makes him a hero. What are some ways we can be heroes in our faith?

Suggested Activities

Courageous Choices: Create scenarios for students to role-play where they have to make courageous choices like Theo did. For example, they might act out a situation where they stand up for their faith or help someone who is being treated unfairly.

Persecution Timeline: Create a timeline of Theo Angelov's life, focusing on his experiences of persecution and faith. Have students add key events and discuss how Theo stayed strong even when times were hard.

Faith in Hard Times Discussion: Lead a discussion about what it means to have faith in hard times, just like Theo Angelov did. Ask students to share any experiences where they had to be brave in their faith.

OLU MENJAY

BAPTIST REBUILDER



Questions for Conversation

- Olu Menjay courageously returned to Liberia after the civil war to help rebuild his country. Why do you think he decided to go back when he could have stayed in the United States?
- Olu worked at Ricks Institute, teaching students to serve and help others. Why do you think teaching service to others is important?
- How can you serve others in your school or neighborhood?
- Olu taught his students that being a leader means working alongside others, not just giving orders. Why do you think it's important for leaders to serve, too?
- How can you show leadership by serving others?
- Olu's work focused on rebuilding not just buildings but also people's lives. Why is it important to focus on both physical and spiritual rebuilding?
- How can you help others not just with their physical needs but also with their emotional and spiritual needs?
- Olu's story shows that we can make a big difference by being willing to serve where we are needed most. How does this inspire you to find ways to help your community?
- What's one way you can make a difference in your community this week?
- Olu's dedication to serving God and his community in Liberia makes him a Baptist hero. How can you be a hero by following God's call to help others?

Suggested Activities

Community Rebuild Game: Set up an obstacle course or team-building game where students have to "rebuild" a structure (like stacking blocks) after it's knocked over. Discuss how Olu Menjay helped rebuild both communities and lives after the war in Liberia.

Service Project: Lead the class in a small service project to help "rebuild" the local community. This could be as simple as planting flowers at the church, picking up litter, or organizing a donation drive. Discuss how serving others helps rebuild communities, just like Olu did.

Personal Service Goal: Have each student come up with a specific goal to serve another person during the week. Examples include helping parents with chores, assisting grandparents, or taking care of a pet. At the next class, students will share how they accomplished their goal and how it made them feel. Discuss how small acts of service can help rebuild and strengthen relationships, just as Olu Menjay worked to rebuild his community.

CONCLUSION

WHAT MAKES A BAPTIST HERO?

Questions for Conversation

- The book tells stories of many courageous Baptist heroes. What do you think all of these heroes have in common?
- Each Baptist hero courageously faced challenges, but they kept going. Why do you think they didn't give up, even when things were difficult?
- The heroes in the book all followed God's call in different ways, like helping people, teaching, or standing up for justice. How do you think God might be calling you to help others?
- What gifts do you have that you can use to help people around you?
- In *Portraits of Courage*, many of the heroes worked to bring freedom and justice to others. Why is it important to stand up for what is right?
- How can you stand up for others at school or in your neighborhood?
- Many of the Baptist heroes worked in other countries or faraway places. How can we be missionaries and heroes in our own communities, even if we don't go far from home?
- What's one way you can help others right where you live?
- *Portraits of Courage* encourages readers to be heroes by listening to God's call. How do you think you can listen for what God wants you to do?
- What's one thing you feel God might be calling you to do today to make a difference?

Suggested Activities

Hero Wall of Fame: Create a "Wall of Fame" where students can display pictures, drawings, or posters of the Baptist heroes they've learned about, as well as local Baptist heroes or leaders. Ask each student to choose one Baptist hero they want to be more like. Have them write down or draw what characteristics or actions inspire them about that hero and how they plan to apply those qualities in their own lives. Add their photos or names to the wall as a reminder that they, too, are heroes in God's eyes, striving to follow the example of those who came before them.

Commitment to Serve: Have a final discussion where students commit to one way they will serve their community, church, or family in the coming weeks. Let them write or draw their commitments and hang them up as reminders of their decision to be like the Baptist heroes they've studied.

Hero's Journey Reflection: Have students reflect on their own "hero's journey" by writing or drawing about times when they've stood up for what's right or helped others. Encourage them to think about how they can continue to be heroes in their daily lives.

Hero Quotes Wall: Write quotes from each courageous Baptist hero on large pieces of paper and hang them around the room. Ask students to walk around and choose one quote that inspires them. Discuss how these words can motivate them to be heroes in their own lives.