

Who Is Your Hero?

By Charlotte Mae Sheppard

(Based on a true story)

"Stand by your conscience, your honor, your faith; stand like a hero" (Children's Songbook, 80).

Ellie bit her thumbnail nervously. Miss Fitz was going down the rows of desks and asking each student a question, one by one.

"Who is your hero?" Miss Fitz asked Jeremy.

Jeremy didn't waste a moment answering. "My dad!" he said proudly.

Miss Fitz smiled. "And yours, Sarah?"

Her answer came just as quickly. "Abraham Lincoln."

Ellie felt her heart thumping as Miss Fitz continued down the row of students. They had been talking about heroes all day, and now everyone was supposed to say who their hero was—in front of the entire class!

Amber and Justin said their moms were their heroes. Walter said his was his grandfather. A few other students said theirs were presidents or other famous leaders.

Only a few students were left before Miss Fitz would reach Ellie. She had to think of a hero—and fast.

Ellie looked down at her shoes, embarrassed. Coming up with a hero wasn't the real problem. She already knew who her hero was. It was Jesus Christ. He had healed the sick, raised the dead, and paid the price for everyone's sins. He was the greatest hero who ever lived! She was just too afraid to say it.

Ellie bit her thumbnail again at the thought of telling the whole class that Jesus Christ was her hero. What if Jeremy laughed at her? What if Sarah and Amber whispered about her at recess?

Of course she knew Jesus Christ was her hero. But that didn't mean everyone else had to know too.

Miss Fitz stopped right in front of Ellie's desk and smiled. "And who is your hero, Ellie?"

Ellie glanced from the row of students beside her up to Miss Fitz. "Abraham Lincoln," she whispered.

Miss Fitz beamed. "Good!" she said as she walked to the next student in the row.

As soon as she was gone, Ellie's shoulders dropped in relief. Thank goodness that was over. The last thing she needed was for everyone in class to know that her hero was—

"Jesus Christ," a voice said.

Ellie's eyes widened as she slowly looked over. There—only a little farther down the row—sat a small boy. He was skinny and shy, and he always sat at the back of the classroom. Ellie didn't even know his name. She couldn't remember him ever saying a single word—until now.

A few students turned to stare at the boy, but he didn't notice them. He just looked up at Miss Fitz and spoke again. "My hero is Jesus Christ."

Miss Fitz smiled brightly and continued down the row. But Ellie looked at the boy in amazement. She had been afraid to tell everyone about her hero, but he hadn't. He didn't even go to her church! But he knew how important it was to stand as an example of Jesus Christ, even when it was hard.

Ellie smiled at the boy. She wouldn't be afraid to say who her hero was anymore. After all, she had two of them now. ♦

The author lives in California, USA.

Ellie knew who her hero was, but she was too afraid to say it.

ILLUSTRATION BY VALERIO FABRETTI