

A Story of Strength – Learning from Women in Haiti

Students will explore how Haitian women in the CLM program overcome poverty and build strong families and communities. They will reflect on the qualities of leadership and strength in real life.

Materials Needed:

- Short narrative (written for middle school) or video about a Haitian mother in the CLM program
 - Whiteboard or projector
 - Paper and colored pencils or markers
 - “Empowerment Word” list (brave, resilient, resourceful, independent, determined, compassionate, innovative, etc.)
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Day 1 Lesson Plan (45 min)

1. Story or Video: "A Strong Haitian Mother" (10 min):

Choose a first-person narrative or video that introduces a woman from the CLM program—highlighting her challenges and how she built a small business to support her family.

Prompt students to listen for these key ideas:

- What problems did she face at the start?
- What did she learn or do to improve her situation?
- How did she support her family or neighbors?

Discussion Questions:

- What qualities helped her succeed?
 - How do you think she felt when her work began helping her family?
 - What do you admire about her choices or actions?
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2. Concept Discussion: What Does Empowerment Really Mean? (10 min)

Write the word **empowerment** on the board. Ask:

- What does this word mean to you?

- How is it different from just “helping” someone?
- Can you think of a time someone empowered *you*?

Distribute empowerment word cards or project a list. Ask students to:

- Choose 1–2 words that describe the woman from the story.
 - Explain their choices in pairs or small groups.
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3. Creative Reflection: Empowerment in Action (15 min)

Ask students to draw or design a one-page visual response:

- Option 1: A portrait of the Haitian woman, with words around her showing how she is empowered.
 - Option 2: A representation of someone they know personally who has overcome challenges (could be themselves).
 - Underneath, write a short caption using at least one empowerment word.
Example: *“My grandmother is resourceful because she started her own business when she lost her job.”*
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4. Reflection & Sharing Circle (5 min)

Invite volunteers to share their work with the class. Encourage thoughtful, respectful listening.

5. Closing Reflection: Small Acts, Big Impact (5 min)

Ask:

- “What is one way you can support or empower someone this week—at home, at school, or in your community?”

Have students write their answer on a sticky note or card to take home or post on a class “Empowerment Wall.”

Everyone Can Be a Leader

Objective:

Students will explore different forms of leadership, especially in women and everyday heroes. They will recognize that leadership is about action, not titles.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper or bulletin board (for Empowerment Quilt)
 - Pre-cut squares of paper (for quilt patches)
 - Markers, glue, scissors
 - Optional: photos of Haitian women in CLM, local women leaders, etc.
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Day 2 – Lesson Plan (45 min)

1. Opening Prompt: What Makes a Leader? (5 min)

Ask:

- Who do you see as a leader in your life or community?
- Can someone be a leader without being in charge?
- Can moms, sisters, or friends be leaders?

List students' ideas on the board to expand their view of leadership.

2. Review and Reconnect: The Haitian Woman's Journey (10 min)

Briefly recap the story or rewatch a short clip.

Ask:

- How did she show leadership in her home or community?
- What were the most important decisions she made?
- What did she learn—and how did she use it?

If available, show additional images of Haitian women in small businesses, healthcare, or education roles.

3. Empowerment Quilt Project (20 min)

Each student creates a **quilt square** representing a female leader or empowered woman.

Options:

- A Haitian woman from the story
- A family member or mentor
- A woman from history or a current event
- Themselves in a future leadership role

Students can draw symbols, portraits, or write a few sentences on their square.

As students finish, they add their squares to a large board or wall to form a visual **Empowerment Quilt**.

4. Gallery Walk & Sharing (5 min)

Allow students to walk around the quilt and observe others' contributions.

Invite 2–3 volunteers to briefly share:

- Who they chose
 - What makes this person a leader
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5. Mercy Connection & Wrap-Up (5 min)

Ask:

- “Why do you think Mercy [or your school’s values] focus on standing with women and families?”
- “How can showing compassion and support be a form of leadership?”

Whole-class Closing Phrase:

“Empowered people empower others. We can lead with strength, kindness, and action.”