



## *Civil Air Patrol's ACE Program*

### **The Great Uncle Wiggly Wings Grade 4 Character Lesson #4**

**Topic:** Caring

**Length of Lesson:** 30 minutes

**Objective:**

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the story of Col Gail Halvorsen by drawing a picture to illustrate the story.
- Students will define the term humanitarian.
- Students will define and identify examples of selfless giving.



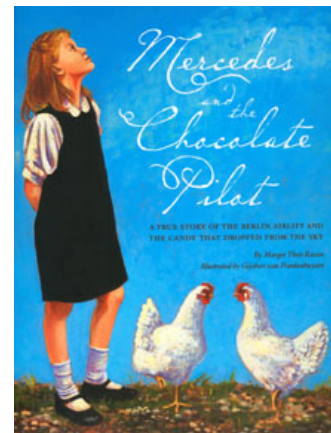
**National Standard Alignment:**

National Science Standards:

- Content Standard A: Science as Inquiry
  - Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry
  - Understanding about scientific inquiry
- Content Standard B: Physical Science
  - Position and motion of objects
- Content Standard G: History and Nature of Science
  - Science as a human endeavor

National Social Studies Standards:

1. Culture
2. Time, Continuity, and Change
3. People, Places, and Environments
6. Power, Authority, and Governance
9. Global Connections
10. Civic Ideals and Practices



**Background Information: THE CANDY BOMBER STORY**

At the end of WWII, a defeated Germany was divided amongst the victors, the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France. The Soviet Union (USSR) took control of the Eastern half of Germany and the Western half was divided amongst the Allied forces of the USA, Great Britain, and France. The city of Berlin was sitting in the middle of the Eastern sector and a union of the four powers, called the Allied Control Council, governed it. The objective of this council was to control and rebuild the war-torn

city of Berlin. Generally, traffic moved throughout the city and much-needed supplies for everyday living for the 2,008,943 Berliners came in without any difficulty. There were many disagreements on the Council as to how the city should be rebuilt. As a result, Joseph Stalin, the leader of the USSR, wanted the US, Great Britain and France out! On the morning of April 9th, 1948, Stalin ordered all American Military personnel maintaining communications equipment out of the Eastern Zone. On June 21st, a US military supply train was halted and it was moved back to the Western sector by a Soviet engine. On the 24th of June 1948, all land and water access to West Berlin was cut off by the Soviets. There were to be no more supplies moved into Berlin. The Allies were certainly not going to stand for this. Diplomacy failed, ground invasions were planned and World War III was eminent. U.S. military commander, General Lucius Clay, had a plan by which an armed convoy through Soviet-controlled Berlin would break the blockade and this action would almost certainly create a war.

British Commander Sir Brian Robertson offered an alternative plan: supply the city by air. It was determined that the city's daily food ration would be 646 tons of flour and wheat; 125 tons of cereal; 64 tons of cooking fat; 109 tons of meat and fish; 180 tons of dehydrated potatoes, 180 tons of sugar; 11 tons of coffee; 19 tons of powdered milk; 5 tons of whole milk for children; 3 tons of fresh yeast for baking; 144 tons of dehydrated vegetables; 38 tons of salt; and 10 tons of cheese. In total, 1,534 tons would be needed daily to keep over 2 million people alive. These figures did not include other necessities, like coal and fuel.

Earlier, in 1945, an agreement was made between all of the powers including the Soviet Union, that three 20 mile-wide air corridors would be established providing access to Berlin. The pact was signed and agreed upon by all the allied powers including the USSR. When the blockade began, the Soviets thought that surely the U.S., Great Britain and France would leave. They were wrong and on June 26, the first American C-47 Skytrain cargo planes landed at Templehof Airport, foreshadowing the great operation that was to come. The great Berlin Airlift began.

This great undertaking was commanded by General William H. Tunner and he was known as the "transportation expert to end all transportation experts" by his commander, General Curtis LeMay.

Life for the people of Berlin was very difficult and had it not been for the Airlift, thousands would have died from starvation and disease. One of the most poignant stories to come out of the Berlin Airlift was that of 1st Lt. Gail Halvorsen, a pilot for the US Air Force. Lt. Halvorsen had a hobby of making home movies and on one of his days off, decided to visit the city he was saving. At Templehof, he noticed, near the end of one of



the main Airlift runways, a group of children watching the planes land. He went over to them and started a conversation. They were especially fascinated with him once they found out he was one of the pilots who was flying in their life-giving supplies. He noticed that they did not ask him for handouts of gum or chocolate. He reached into his pocket and found that he only had two sticks of Wrigley's Doublemint gum. He told them that if they didn't fight over it, he would drop some candy to them, by parachute, the next day when he flew over. They were very courteous and distributed the pieces of gum equally amongst themselves. Before he left, one child asked him how they would know it was he when he dropped the candy. He said, "I'll wiggle my wings!" True to his word, the very next day, on approach to Berlin, he rocked the airplane and dropped some chocolate bars attached to a handkerchief parachute to the children waiting below. Every day, the number of children would increase and he made several more drops. Soon there was a stack of mail at the Base Operations addressed to "Uncle Wiggly Wings," "The Chocolate Flyer," and the "Chocolate Uncle." Eventually he was "called on the carpet" by his commander because some local newspaper reporter published a picture of Halverson's plane going by with tiny parachutes trailing it. His commander wasn't happy about it, but General Tunner thought it was just the kind of morale boost that the operation needed. It was eventually dubbed, "Operation Little Vittles!" The "Operation" continued and over three tons of candy was dropped over Berlin; some even landed in the Soviet Sector. For this simple, kindhearted gesture, Halvorsen became the most recognized pilot of the Berlin Airlift.



### Materials:

- background information
- *Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot* by Margot Theis Raven (optional)
- student copies of Uncle Wiggly Wings packet (packet available through CAP)
- supplies for making parachutes (optional - see enrichment/extension ideas)

### Lesson Presentation:

1. Share the story of Uncle Wiggly Wings from the background information (or read the book *Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot* by Margot Theis Raven, or provide copies of the attached Uncle Wiggly Wings booklet to share the story).
2. Ask students to try to imagine themselves in the place of the young children described in the Uncle Wiggly Wings story. Ask how they would have felt about someone like Col Halverson.

3. Ask students to explain the example set by Col. Halverson. (caring, selfless giving) Explain that selfless giving means giving without expecting anything in return.
4. Tells students that Uncle Wiggly Wings was a humanitarian. Ask students if they can define the term "humanitarian" based on what they know about Uncle Wiggly Wings. (A humanitarian is one who is concerned about other people and does something to try to help them improve their lives. A humanitarian does not expect to be given rewards for his or her good deeds.) Point out that the word "human" is part of the word "humanitarian," which can help them remember that it is a human who helps improve the lives of other humans.
5. Have students draw a picture illustrating the story of Uncle Wiggly Wings in order to help them remember what they learned today.

**Summary:**

Ask students to share something that they learned today. Remind students that the story of Uncle Wiggly Wings describes the unselfish actions of a "true" American, a humanitarian. Ask students to share ways that they can be selfless givers. Encourage students to look for ways to help others. Even doing something small can help make someone's day very joyful.

**Assessment:**

- student answers to class discussion questions
- student drawings

**Additional activity ideas to enrich and extend the primary lesson:**

- Have students make parachutes in honor of Uncle Wiggly Wings and as a reminder to give to others.
  - 1) Depending upon the size of the parachute you want to make, measure out four equal lengths of household string and cut.
  - 2) One at a time, tie the end of the string to the corner of a square piece of cloth. You can use a square bandanna.
  - 3) The candy bar is wrapped so that the long end will have some extra string available to attach to the parachute. A piece of masking tape was used to hold the string in place to keep the candy from separating when the parachute opens.
  - 4) The four strings (in parachute terms, these are known as shroud lines) should be tied to the candy bar so that each one is an equal length from the attachment point. The parachute is carefully folded with the candy bar on top. When thrown upward, the parachute should open and float gently to the ground.



For smaller parachutes:

- 1) Use a regular paper napkin. (Higher quality napkins work best.)



- 2) Unfold the napkin all the way.
  - 3) Take four strings of equal length and four small stickers (round dot stickers are fine). Attach a string to each corner of the unfolded napkin with the stickers.
  - 4) Pull the strings together and tie a knot in the end of the strings to keep them together.
  - 5) Attach a miniature candy, like the Hershey miniatures, to the end of the strings. (You can use tape or a paper clip to attach the candy to the strings).
  - 6) Toss the parachute in the air and watch it float to the ground. You may choose to drop the parachute at the top of a stairway, but remember safety issues.
- Allow students to experiment with variables while dropping their parachutes. Ask students to change something about their parachutes - like size of the parachute, type of material used for the parachute, weight of object attached to the parachute, etc. - and see what changes about the movement of the parachute.