

# Courage

**Pre-teach:** Greet the students and tell them that today you will be discussing the trait courage. Ask the following questions and call on different students for answers. Listed below each question are examples of the types of responses you are looking for. You may need to rephrase students' answers or guide them along.

*(Ask) What does courage mean?*

1. Doing the right thing even if it is difficult.
2. Facing your fears with confidence - being brave.

*(Ask) What are some ways you can show courage?*

1. Do the right thing, even if others are not.
2. Bravely deal with your daily challenges.
3. Be willing to try new things, even if you might fail.
4. Tell the truth regardless of the consequences.
5. Face your fears and work to overcome them.
6. Admit your mistakes and learn from them.
7. Do not give into negative peer pressure

*(Ask) Name some people who have shown courage?*

1. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Susan B. Anthony, soldiers, police officers, fire fighters

**Book:** Read and a discuss story that teaches a lessons about the trait courage. (Book suggestions attached)

*(Ask) Which action is courageous and which is foolish?*

1. Fighting or walking away from a fight
2. Doing something dangerous that others are doing or not participating even if someone calls you "chicken"
3. Teasing and bullying someone or standing up for someone who is being mistreated
4. Blaming others for your mistakes or accepting responsibility
5. Ignoring a new student or making friends with a new student
6. Only looking out for yourself or helping others
7. Following the crowd or doing what's right
8. Quitting when things get tough or working hard, even when it's difficult

**Activity:** Complete an activity to go along with your lessons. *(Activity suggestions are attached)* Remember, you can incorporate your activity at any time during your lesson.

**Closing comment:** It takes courage to do the right thing. Stand up for what is right, even if you stand alone. *(Pass out Courage bookmarks. Bookmarks attached. Make copies as needed.)*

*"Courage conquers all things." ~Ovid*

# Courage Activities

## **The Courageous Egg** (Suggested for all grades)

**Materials:** Wide mouthed glass or jar, uncooked rice, egg

Place the egg in the middle of the glass completely covered by rice. Explain that the egg represents someone who hanging with the crowd. One day the group starts making fun of other people, the egg doesn't like it so he tells them to stop (tap the top of the rim, the egg will rise up from the rice with each tap). Next, the group of friends starts excluding others from their games (tap the rim) and they start telling lies. Each time the egg refuses to go along with his friends and stands up for what's right (tap again). Continue until the egg has completely risen above the rice. Tell the students it takes courage to do the right thing when others are not. A courageous person will rise to the top and stand out from the rest!

## **The Courage to be Different** (Suggested for all grades)

**Materials:** Food or clothing from a different culture

Share the food or clothing with the class. Encourage them to try the food or have someone put on the clothing. Discuss that it takes courage to try something new or wear clothes that are different from what others are wearing. Talk about how it takes courage to do many things in life, like making friends with a new student or admitting a mistake. Ask the students to share examples of their own acts of courage.

## **On a Roll** (Suggested for all grades)

**Materials:** One sheet of copy paper, small book

Show the class the piece of paper and ask them if there is any way the paper can hold up the book, using only one hand to hold the paper. You can ask for several volunteers to try; soon they will realize there is no way. Now take the paper and roll it tightly into a tube, the diameter of about 1 to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Hold the tube in one hand and carefully place the book on top of the open end of the tube. It should support the book. Relate this to the ability we all have to turn our weaknesses into strengths and show courage. The paper at first is flimsy, weak, lacking backbone and character- easy to crush and overwhelm. This might be compared to some people who are faced with a problem or obstacle, they may lack the courage to confront the problem or stand up to the opposition. But, with determination we can turn our weaknesses into strengths. Just as the paper can be rolled into a sturdy tube, we can work to add muscle to our weaknesses if we have the courage to persist. We will then develop backbone to hold up under pressure. Ask the students to give examples of what someone could do to turn a weakness into strength. Examples: Marty has to give a presentation in class and he is afraid to speak in front of his classmates. Jackie loves to play basketball but she is extra short for her age. She is afraid to sign up for the team because her skills might not measure up. (*10-Minute Life Lessons, by Jaime Miller*)

## **Act it out!** (Suggested for grades 3 - 5)

**Materials:** None

Have students work in small groups to role play situations in which a person shows courage. You may want to write possible scenarios on note cards and distribute one to each group. Allow each group to perform their skit for the rest of the class. Remind students to be a respectful while others are performing.

## Courage Activities (*continued*)

### **Gone Fishin'** (Suggested for all grades)

**Materials:** Paper, hole punch, paper clips, wooden dowel, string, magnet, and a can

Give each student a small piece of paper. Have them fold it in half. On the upper half, have them write down something they are, or were, afraid of. On the lower half, have them write what they did or can do to get over this fear. They do not need to put their name on the paper. Punch a hole through the top of both pieces of paper near the fold, then attach a paper clip. Have students place the pieces of paper in a can. Give students a "fishing pole," a wooden dowel with string and a magnet attached to the end. Have the students take turns dropping the end of the pole into the can. The magnet will attach to the paper clip. Then students "reel in" the clip of paper and read what is on the paper. Discuss how it takes courage to overcome our fears. (*The Best of Character, Duane Hodgkin*)

### **What Does Courage Look Like?** (Suggested for all grades)

**Materials:** Drawing paper

Have students draw a picture of courage in action. Have them title their picture by completing the sentence "Courage is...." If possible, display the pictures in the classroom.

### **A Quote To Ponder** (Suggested for grades 3 -5)

**Materials:** None

Write this quote on the board and discuss it with the students: "Courage is being scared to death...and saddling up anyway." ~John Wayne~ Next, ask the students to write and illustrate their own quote for courage. Display in the classroom.

## Book suggestions for courage

- Kindergarten:** The Brave Little Bird, *Scott Beck*  
Rainbow Fish to the Rescue, *Marcus Pfister*  
Brave Irene, *William Steig*
- First Grade:** Nessa's Fish, *Nancy Luenn*  
There's a Monster Under My Bed? *James Howe*  
Brave Potatoes, *Toby Speed*
- Second Grade:** The Bravest Dog Ever, The True Story of Balto, *Natalie Standiford*  
Dogzilla, *Dav Pilkey*  
Pets to the Rescue, *Andrew Clements*
- Third Grade:** The Children's Book of Virtues, *William Bennett*  
The Boy Who Held Back the Sea, *Thomas Locker*  
Brave as a Mountain, *Ann Herbert Scott*
- Fourth Grade:** The Children's Book of Heroes, *William Bennett*  
Chicken Soup for Kids, Stories of Courage, *Jack Canfield*  
Saint George and the Dragon, *Margaret Hoages*
- Fifth Grade:** The Big Wave, *Pearl Buck*  
Kids With Courage, *Barbara Leaks*  
Secret of the Peaceful Warrior, *Dan Millman*

## Bookmarks for Courage

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