



COURAGE



**BUILD CHARACTER
BUILD SUCCESS**

WHY COURAGE?

Courage is identified as a strength of character that contributes to optimal human development.¹ By teaching children to be courageous, we are also promoting authenticity, bravery and persistence.¹ This skill not only helps children develop a sense of what is right and just, but it provides them with a sense of agency to put what they believe in into practice. It also gives them a space to try something new and develop their skills. By teaching children to be courageous we are encouraging them to be active participants in doing what is right and pursuing new opportunities and skills.

GOALS

To help your students understand courage and bravery.

To help your students learn that having courage means standing up for what is right or trying something new, even when it is scary or difficult.

To help your students take the next step by challenging themselves to do something courageous as individuals and to stand up for what is right in your classroom and school.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Art supplies

Sandwich bags

Chart paper/board

Water

Paper and pencils

Sharp pencils

The authors of this manual recognize that you are the expert of your classroom and if you wish to add to this lesson any of your own activities or materials related to this module's theme, please feel free to do so.

¹Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2006). Moral competence and character strengths among adolescents: The development and validation of the Values in Action Inventory Strengths for Youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29(6), 891-909. Doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2006.04.011

Introduction

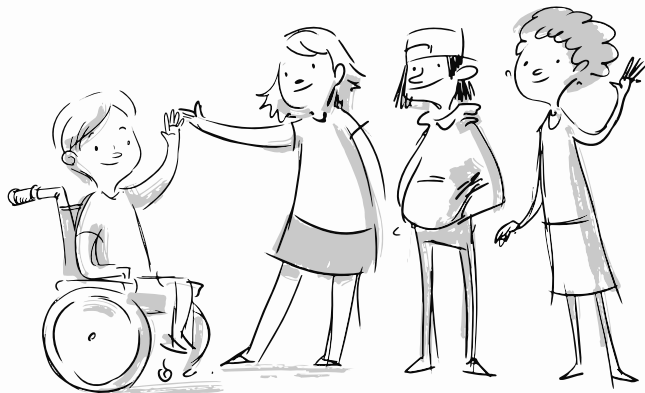
Ask your students if they know what courage means. Brainstorm together a definition for the classroom, along with examples of showing courage. Organize these examples of courage in terms of how to be a more courageous a) individual, b) classroom, c) school (see table below). Post this list in your classroom over the next month to help the children remember what courage means. Here are some ways to help them define courage and courageous behaviour:

For younger students

- Standing up for what's right
- Helping others
- Getting help when you feel afraid
- Trying a new challenge even though it might be scary

For older students

- Facing fears with confidence²
- Overcoming fear to do the right thing²
- Facing challenges directly²
- Knowing when to reach out for help or assistance
- Challenging yourself to try a new skill
- Standing up for and helping others



What Courage Looks Like

Showing perseverance may include the following:

- Practicing something that scares you, like public speaking
- Speaking up when you see something that is unfair
- Stepping out of your comfort zone to take the lead on a project or activity
- Asking for help when you are facing a big challenge, instead of backing down or saying you can't do it
- Trying out for a new club or team
- Auditioning for a performance (play, musical, talent show etc.)
- Standing up for someone when you see them being bullied
- Taking time to meet someone new, especially if they are different from you
- Say yes to a new opportunity like being asked to represent your class or volunteer in the school
- Learn a new skill like swimming or sewing
- Tell the truth even when it is difficult
- Take responsibility for your mistakes
- Try a food you have never had before
- Apologize when you have done something wrong and make it right
- Raising your hand when your teacher asks for volunteers
- Visit a place you have never been before

² Adapted from the Durham District School Board (DDSB) Character Education website.



CHALLENGE: HOW TO SHOW MORE PERSEVERANCE AS A(N)...

Individual

Try something new even though it might be scary (e.g. public speaking, trying out for a new team)

Take responsibility for your mistakes by admitting them and then making it right

Challenge yourself to practice a new skill and step out of your comfort zone

Classroom

Ask a teacher or peer for help when facing a new challenge

Raise your hand when your teacher asks for volunteers

Teach other students about new subjects and topics you are passionate about

School

Help around the school by volunteering for something you have never done before

Work towards a social justice program in the school, like raising money for a new school in a developing country or raising awareness about an important cause

Quazar Video 1 Questions

NOTE: These video clips are snapshots of the character attribute. They are not meant to be complete lessons, but simply to bring awareness of the attribute to your students.

Here are some follow-up questions and possible answers for the Quazar video to help your students further discuss and think about courage:

- 1) Why can it be difficult to practice courage? Is it scary sometimes, like public speaking in the video?
- 2) What would have happened if the student in the video did not use courage to give the presentation?
- 3) How does courage help you practice new skills or get better at something?
- 4) What are some new skills or activities that you are going to try this month so you can practice courage? (Provide examples like public speaking, trying out for a new team etc.)



Classroom Activities

For younger students

1) This is an art/writing activity and it can be modified to suit the needs of your class. Students are to draw/create a superhero version of themselves. They can give the superhero powers, a costume etc. and you can incorporate various art materials if you wish. The superhero version of themselves must be created to battle or overcome a fear that the student personally has. This can be anything from a fear of heights to a fear of auditioning for the school talent show. This activity can also be extended to include a drawing of the villain the superhero must face and the villain is based on the student's fear. Optional: students can do a write-up to go along with their superhero, explaining how the superhero is designed to overcome it. Teacher facilitators are encouraged to have a discussion about courage with students prior to and after this activity.

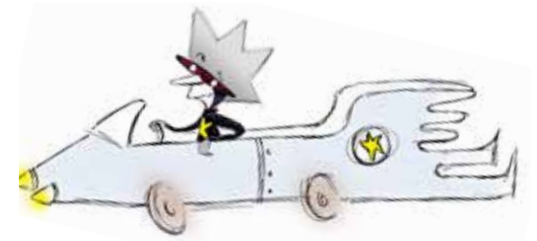
For older students

1) This is a drama game that can be used to build community and challenge student's relationship to fear. Before beginning the game, clearly explain the rules and boundaries. Students will come up one at a time if they like and proudly state a made up failure (remind students that they cannot be real scenarios). This can be something like "I forgot to turn off the lights at home" or "I put a red shirt in the white laundry and now everything is pink". The failures should not be something traumatic or gross. The class will then loudly applaud for the student at the front. The idea behind this game is to celebrate our failures because it means that we learned something new. Having courage means that sometimes we will fail but we can celebrate those failures, learn from them and then take more courageous chances. The teacher can also make up the failures for students to say at the front of the class if a student wants to participate but cannot think of anything.

2) This activity is great for hands on, tactile learners and it can also be used as a science lesson. Have students fill the sandwich bags half full of water, then have them seal the top. Students must make sure that their pencils are sharp. Ask students what they think will happen if we tried to put a pencil through the bag of water. Then have them try it and they will see that it does not leak. Explain that sometimes the pencil is like the things we are scared or worried about: we are afraid it will hurt us or take away our strength (like making the bag leak). But we can use courage to overcome those fears, like sticking the pencil into the bag. Often, we will come out successful at the other end.

2) This activity helps students to understand the difference between their "comfort zone" and their "courage zone." Teachers can do this as a class, individually or both. Students will draw a circle (again, either themselves, in groups or as a class) and write things in the middle that are within their comfort zone. Some ideas include things they like doing, things that are easy for them or things that have a low risk. Then outside of the circle, students can write things that are in their "courage zone". Some examples include: things that scare them, things that they have never done before and places they have never been. Teacher facilitators are encouraged to have a discussion around the benefits of stepping out of your comfort zone and practicing courage.

For a visual representation visit: <https://engagetheirminds.com/2014/08/28/courage-zone/>



Quotations About Perseverance

These quotations can also be posted in the classroom to remind students about the importance of practicing courage.

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgement that something else is more important than fear.” ”

~ Ambrose Redmoon

“You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”

~ Winnie the Pooh

“Good character is having the courage to do the right thing.”

~ Anonymous

“Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity.”

~ W. Clement Stone

“Courage is the ability to do the right thing, all the time, no matter how painful or uncomfortable it might be.”

~ Tony Dungy





Courage Reading List

The following books explore the theme of inclusivity for children of different ages and can also be used to help teach students about courage:

Grades K-3:

- *Courage* by Bernard Waber
- *Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun* by Maria Dismondy
- *Peep!: A Little Book About Taking a Leap* by Maria van Lieshout
- *The Little Yellow Leaf* by Carin Berger

Grades 3-5:

- *It's The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles
- *Back of the Bus* by Aaron Reynolds

Grades 6-8

- *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis
- *Divergent* by Veronica Roth
- *Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry

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