

## Character Education: Grades 3-5

January / February 2013

### Courage

#### 1. Introduction

- a. If this is your first session, introduce yourself and your family (if your child is in that class).
- b. If you have taught this class before, bring in a picture or souvenir of your child to share with the class.

#### 2. Character Education – what it's all about:

- a. Remember, this is about helping you learn to make good choices – even when you're having a difficult time. This will help you grow into mature, successful and caring adults.
- b. Recap the previous character traits:
  - i. Respect: Everyone deserves respect. When you respect others – you earn their respect too.
  - ii. Kindness: Being kind to others is not just about making someone else happy – it makes you happy too!
- c. Now today, we're going to talk about one very important character trait – courage

#### 3. Define Courage

Ask the students to say some words that define or are the same as kindness (write them on the board)

##### **THEN SHARE THIS DEFINITION**

- a. Having the determination to do the right thing even when others don't
- b. Having the strength to follow your conscience instead of following the crowd
- c. Attempting to do difficult things that are worthwhile.
- d. There are many types and levels of courage...from saving someone's life to trying something new

#### 4. Discussion questions:

- a. What are some other words for courage? (bravery, bold, fearlessness, determination)
- b. What does it mean to have courage?
- c. Have you ever witnessed acts of courage?

- d. Can you think of a time when you needed to be courageous?
- e. How did you get over your fears?
- f. Ever heard the phrase "when the going gets tough, the tough get going?"  
What does that mean?

**5. Literature Suggestions:** (Time will probably only allow for one story)

If you have a book at home that you would like to read to the students then please do so. Before reading, think through what you want the students to learn and make a note of questions you intend to ask them. Below are 3 recommended books.

- a. **Brave Irene, by William Steig** (can be borrowed from Greensboro Library).
  - i. Was Irene brave? Why? Was she scared too? Can you be scared and brave at the same time?
  - ii. What would you have done if you were in her shoes?
  - iii. Have you ever felt like she did? When?
- b. **The Story of Ruby Bridges, by Robert Coles** (can be borrowed from Greensboro Library).
  - i. Was Ruby brave? How do you know? Was she scared too? Can you be scared and brave at the same time?
  - ii. What would you have done if you were in her shoes?
  - iii. Who else showed courage?
  - iv. Have you ever felt like she did? When?
- c. **The Children's Book of Virtues by William J Bennett** (can be borrowed from Greensboro Library).
  - i. This book contains a number of short stories that are great for demonstrating courage.

**6. ACTIVITIES** (Choose one or 2 activities depending on time)

- a. **All kinds of courage...**
  - i. **PREPARATION:** Print out enough copies of the sheet at the end of this lesson so each student has one each.
  - ii. Hand out the sheets to the students.
  - iii. Read each sentence aloud and give them a couple of minutes between each sentence to write a couple of sentences about how each one can be called an act of courage.
  - iv. Have the students call out what they have written at the end of the exercise.

**b. My Courage Shield:**

- i. PREPARATION:** Print out one shield from the end of each lesson for each student.
- ii.** Hand out the shields to the students.
- iii.** Tell them to draw a picture that represents how they show courage at home, or with their family and friends on the left.
- iv.** Tell them to draw a picture that represents how they can show courage at school on the right.
- v.** Tell them to draw a picture of some of their sources of courage in the middle... What makes them courageous (Examples could be parents, teacher, older sibling)

**c. Not Fighting is Courageous**

- i.** Discuss with the students why it takes courage to walk away from a fight. Ask the students what are some of the consequences for fighting then discuss how it is important to stand up for what you believe in using nonviolent means.
- ii.** Brainstorm ways in which children could do that. Ask the students to think of an example of when they could be courageous and walk away from a situation. What would be their next steps? You could brainstorm together as a class different scenarios and the proper way to handle each scenario.
- iii.** Have each child draw a picture and write about how they could use courage to walk away from a fight.
- iv.** Once all the students have completed their story a class book could be created by binding all the stories together. The book could be left for the class to read.

**7. Reminder:** Courage is not just about saving a life or putting out a fire. Courage is just as much about standing up for what's right and trying something new or something hard that is really worthwhile!

# All Kinds of Courage

There are countless acts of courage performed by people, young and old, every day. Think about each of the situations below. Write at least two sentences to explain why each situation can be called an act of courage.

- Rescuing a kitten from the attack of a dog.

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- Giving a speech in front of a lot of people.

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- Standing up to a bully.

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- Admitting you don't understand when a teacher calls on you.

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- Confessing that you took something that didn't belong to you.

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- Submitting a poem you wrote to the newspaper editor.

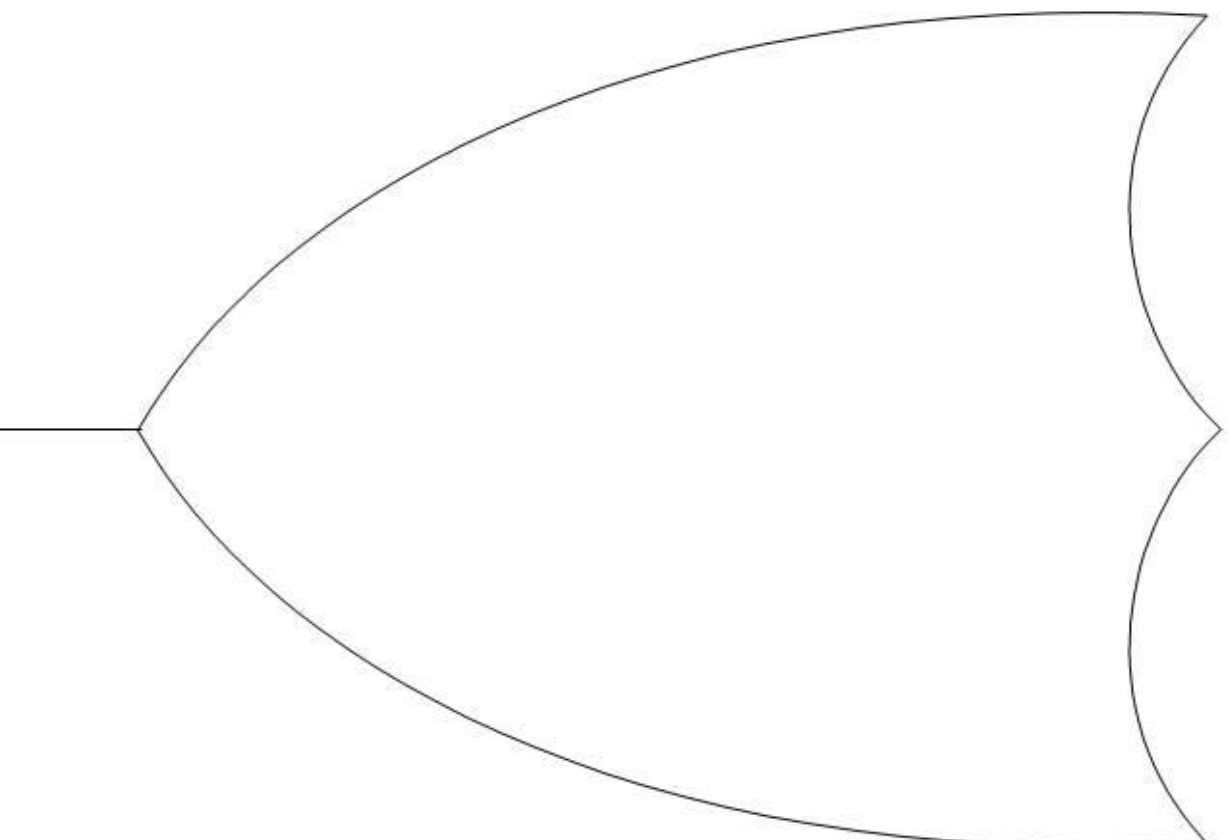
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With Courage to help me, I can face anything

At home



At school