

Character Education

January/February 2014

Courage

Define Courage

- 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.

Literature Selections

Choose a book to read aloud and discuss.

1. "Chrysanthemum" by Kevin Henkes
2. "Brave Irene" by William Steig
3. "A Bad Case of the Stripes" by David Shannon
4. "Courage" by Bernard Waber
5. "Amazing Grace" by Mary Hoffman

Activities

Courage Collage Bring in magazines & have students cut out pictures of courage (someone speaking publicly, someone climbing a mountain, someone running a race, someone in a wheelchair, etc.) and paste in their own collage or in a larger, classroom collage.

"All kinds of Courage" worksheet

Sequence the Story

"Badge of Courage"

"Role Playing"

"On a Roll" demonstration

Closing

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. _____

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

- Standing up to a bully. _____

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

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

- Submitting a poem you wrote to the newspaper editor. _____

- Diving from the high board into a pool. _____



Courage

standing strong for your own beliefs and doing what's right even when others disagree

Sequence the Story

Give each child a David's Bike Helmet reproducible and a construction paper strip. Ask children to cut apart the story cards. Then, have them put the cards in the correct order to show the story of how David performed a courageous act (wearing his bike helmet and standing up for what he knows is right even though another child made fun of him for it). When children correctly sequence the story cards, invite them to color the pictures. Then, have them glue the cards in the correct order on their paper strip. Discuss the story cards with the class. Ask children to explain what is happening in each picture. Have children explain how David was courageous. To extend the activity, invite children to write the story shown on the cards.

Materials

- ♥ David's Bike Helmet reproducible (page 28)
- ♥ 4" x 24" (10 cm x 61 cm) construction paper strips
- ♥ scissors
- ♥ crayons or markers
- ♥ glue



Not Fighting Is Courageous

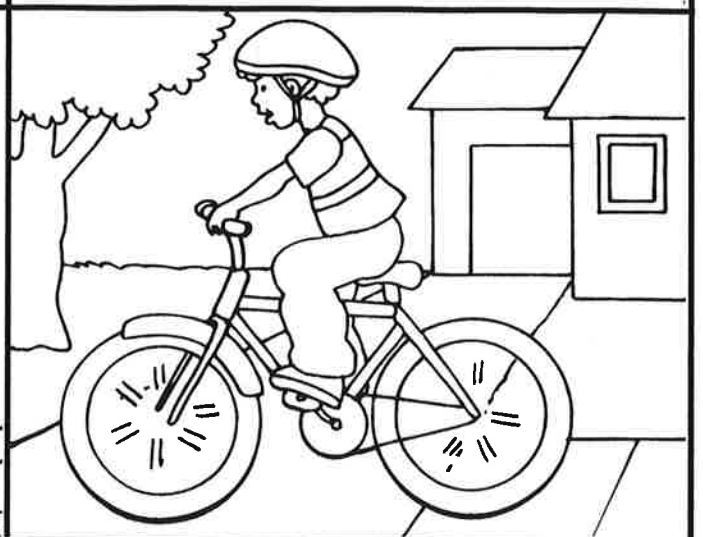
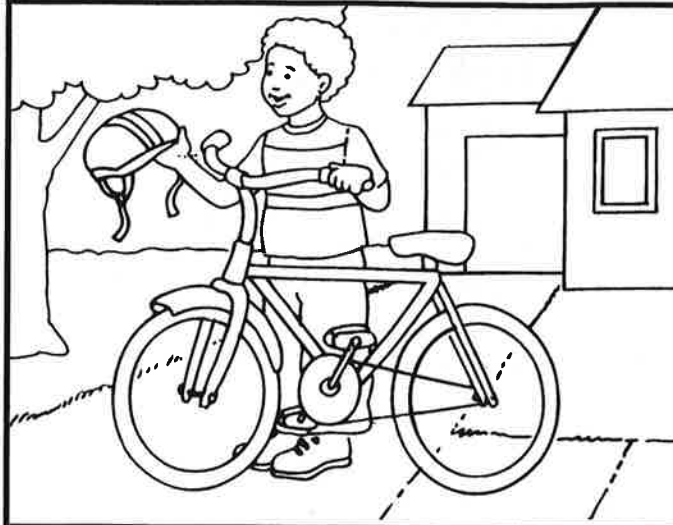
Discuss with the class why it takes courage to walk away from a fight. Invite a police officer or community leader to visit your classroom to discuss this, the consequences of fighting, and why it is important to settle matters in a nonviolent manner. Ask the class to also discuss how it is important to stand up for what they believe in even though it may not be a popular idea with others. Record children's ideas on chart paper. Invite children to illustrate and write about what they should do and why they should not fight with others (e.g., you should walk away from an argument to avoid confrontation, if you get in a fight you could say mean things and hurt someone's feelings). Display children's work, or bind the pages together to make a class book. To extend the activity, take the class to the school library to find books about leaders in history who had the courage to stand up for unpopular beliefs (e.g., Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi). Encourage children to read about these leaders and share the information with classmates.

Materials

- ♥ chart paper
- ♥ drawing paper
- ♥ bookbinding materials (optional)

David's Bike Helmet

Directions: Cut apart the story cards. Put the cards in the correct order to show the story of how David performed a courageous act. Color the pictures. Glue the cards on a construction paper strip in the correct order.



Activity: Badge of Courage

Have the students create a badge of courage including the following statements:

1. I stand up for what is right, even if I stand alone.
2. I don't cave in to negative peer pressure.
3. Fear of failure does not prevent me from trying things.
4. I am not afraid to express myself just because some people might disagree.

Activity: Role Playing

How would you practice courage if...

1. Your friends want you to try something (teasing a new classmate, lying, etc.) and you know it is wrong?
2. Your teacher asks you to read your book report in front of the class?
3. While playing with your brother's favorite toy, it breaks. No one is around when it happens?
4. At a store, you see a classmate pick up a necklace that just had fallen off a woman. He does not return the necklace. Minutes later, on the loud speaker, the store's supervisor asks if anyone has seen or found a lost necklace?
5. You are a new student and don't know where to sit in the cafeteria?
6. You didn't study for a history test and your teacher wants to discuss your test results?
7. You are involved in an after school fight with a neighbor. Your mother asks you to go over to our neighbor's house and apologize?

On a Roll

Group size: 2 or more

Age: 4 and up

Materials: 1 sheet of typing paper, 1 small book

Show the child the piece of paper and ask him if there is any way the paper can hold up the book, if he uses only one hand to hold the paper. The child may try, or may automatically realize there is no way.

Now take the paper and roll it tightly into a tube, the diameter of which should be about 1 to 1 ½ 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 each have of turning our weaknesses into strengths. 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.

In a sense, they have a weakness—it might be fear, insecurity, or a prior failure that worries them. A child who strikes out every time at bat has a fear that he will

Courage and Adversity

never be able to hit the ball; that fear becomes a paralyzing weakness.

There are ways we can turn our weaknesses into strengths. Through practice, determination, patience, and perseverance, we can improve and sharpen our skills. Just as the paper can be rolled into a sturdy tube, we can work to add muscle to our frailties if we have the courage to persist. We will thereby develop the fortitude and backbone to hold up under pressure.

Ask the child to tell what someone could do to turn the following weaknesses into strengths:

- Tommy has to give a speech in class and is afraid to speak in front of his classmates.
- Jenny loves ice cream and cookies but she has gained 10 pounds in the last year and is somewhat overweight for her age.
- Karen was born blind and, at age seven, goes to a special school. Lately her parents have noticed her sitting at the piano making up her own simple melodies.
- Steven is in junior high and his grades are below average. He's not very popular and he doesn't feel good about himself. The only thing he seems interested in is photography.
- Jeffrey is extra short for his age, 10. He loves basketball but has always been timid about signing up for a team, thinking that his skills wouldn't measure up.