

## Character Education

### "Courage" Grades 5-8

#### **DEFINITION:**

Courage is deciding to go forward in spite of a situation that may not be popular or may be difficult, or dangerous.

#### **STUDENT ACTIVITIES:**

- Have students watch the video on local Keller ISD former student, Lyndon LaPlante. (The video is available through the KISD Communications Department). Discuss how Lyndon demonstrated courage on the football field, in his classroom, with his friends, and in his life.
- Have students research people in history who took a stand for something they felt was right, even when the majority did not. Have them write a short paragraph about the courage of that person.
- Have the students write their own definition of courage and then compare it to the dictionary.
- Allow several students to share what they think courage is and what it looks like. Ask students to illustrate "courage" in a picture.
- Ask students to interview a parent or elder about courage. How have they stood for the right thing in the past when others did not? Allow students to share the results of their interviews with the class.
- Have the students write in their journal or during creative writing about what our world would be like if no one had courage. How would people act? What would happen to our community and world? Allow students to share their stories.
- Divide students into cooperative groups. Allow them to come up with situations at school where courage should be demonstrated. Allow them to share with the whole class.
- Learn the words for "*courage*" in other languages. Discuss the likenesses and differences of the meaning of courage in other cultures and find examples.
- Have the students, as a class, brainstorm various situations at school where they should stand up for the right thing (e.g. cheating, lying, and teasing).

- Define the term "peer pressure". Discuss how peer pressure can be difficult to stand against and how courage relates to peer pressure.
- Have students write about a time they stood up for what they believed. Allow them to share the end result. Review the term "peer pressure" and the importance of having courage. Relate this to health issues such as alcohol and drug use, use of tobacco, cheating, lying, shoplifting, and other mischievous activities and behaviors.
- Use a thesaurus and find as many synonyms for the word "courage" as you can. Have a contest to see who can come up with the most.
- Permit students to look in various newspapers or magazines and find a person who is an example of courage. Allow students to share with the class.
- Have students do research on the Special Olympics. Identify an athlete and write about his/her courage in overcoming a challenge in order to compete. Share the "courage" of the Olympian and how it helped him/her to reach a dream.
- Study and discuss people who have affected history such as Abraham Lincoln, Davy Crockett, John Glenn, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Marian Wright Edelman, The Wright Brothers, Christa McAuliffe etc. Examine how life today might be different if not for their actions and courage.
- Discuss athletes who exemplify courage and why. Examples might include Jackie Robinson, Brian Piccolo, and Lance Armstrong.
- Have the students locate famous quotes about courage. Make a class bulletin board displaying these.
- Have students write an original poem about courage.
- Write a one or two page fictional story of courage. Encourage students to use their imaginations. Create a class book of the stories to share with parents at "open house."
- Read the book *Courage* by Bernard Waber. Discuss the "*courage*" that was shown in each situation. (Ask your librarian for suggested reading materials.)
- Have students make a list of challenges in their everyday lives that require courage. Examples might include overcoming shyness, moving to a new town, death of someone close or the death of a pet, divorce, physical challenges, breakup of friendships, etc.

**SOURCES:**

Birdville ISD Virtue Education Model

Core Essentials sponsored by Chick-Fil-A

Girls and Boys Town National Resource Training Center

Carson-Dellosa Publishing

*Young People's Lessons in Character* by B. David Brooks, Ph.D.

Creative Teaching Press

Teaching Values-Reaching Kids: The Learning Works, Inc.

<http://www.humanityquest.com>

<http://www.GoodCharacter.com>

<http://education-world.com>