

## Lesson One - Courage

Aim: What does the term courage mean? What are different ways that a person can be courageous (physically, morally, etc.)?

Do Now: Students will write a paragraph addressing the following: In what ways have you demonstrated courage in your life?

Discussion Questions: (to be discussed aloud in class or written on the board for students to respond individually on paper)

- What is moral courage? What are some historic & recent examples of moral courage or moral cowardice?
- What things in your life require moral courage?
- What do you think stops people from taking a stand against something they know is wrong?
- Are there kids in your school who pick on others? How do you feel about it? Why do people allow that to happen? What could you do about it?
- Is courage something you have to be born with, or can you develop it?
- What does courage have to do with the quality of your character?

Cooperative Activity:

1. Students will create a graffiti wall for the trait "courage." Each student should contribute words, phrases, or illustrations. Completed work could be submitted to be displayed around the school.
2. Students will create a booklet of individuals who are courageous:
  - Students will create a list of five (5) individuals who they would consider to be courageous.
  - Each student is responsible for completing a description of one of the people, as well as an explanation as to why the group feels that particular person is courageous.

Individual Activity:

1. Students will make a web of synonyms, words, phrases that describe the term courage.
2. Students will create an acrostic poem using the word COURAGE.

Closure:

Students will create a journal entry responding to the following:

- Have you ever gone along with the crowd even though you knew it was wrong?
- How did you feel about yourself?
- What did you learn from it?
- What was the hardest stand you ever had to take with your friends?
- Did it cost you anything?
- What were the benefits?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

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- What does courage have to do with the quality of your character?

Activity:

1. As a class, you will create a graffiti wall for the trait "courage." Each student should contribute words, phrases, poems, or illustrations that represent courage.

or

2. Students will create a booklet of individuals who are courageous:

- Students will create a list of five (5) individuals who they would consider to be courageous.
- Each student is responsible for completing a description of one of the people, as well as an explanation as to why the group feels that particular person is courageous

**Directions:** Complete the table below by choosing true or false to honestly answer the questions. Then, answer the questions that follow.

**Are You a Caring Person?**

True	False	
		I stand up for what is right, even if I stand alone.
		I don't cave in to negative peer pressure.
		Fear of failure does not prevent me from trying things.
		I am not afraid to express myself just because some people might disapprove.
I think I am/am not a courageous person because:		

1. Have you ever gone along with the crowd even though you knew it was wrong?

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2. How did you feel about yourself?

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3. What did you learn from it?

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4. What was the hardest stand you ever had to take with your friends?

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5. Did it cost you anything?

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6. What were the benefits?

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7. In the next week, what's one courageous act you will perform to help make your school a better place?

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Name\_\_\_\_\_

Character Education

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Period\_\_\_\_\_

**Aim: How do you persevere when faced with an obstacle?**

You can become either "bitter" or "better" from events in your life. And the only difference between these two words is the letter "i". "I" have the choice as to whether to grow or wither from what life gives me.

*Decide whether you think the person was a success or failure in his field. Write either the letter "F" for failure, or "S" for success before each one.*

**SUCCESS OR FAILURE?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Politician: Ran for political office seven times and was defeated each time.

\_\_\_\_\_ Cartoonist: All he wanted to do was to sketch cartoons. He applied with a Kansas City newspaper. The editor said, "It's easy to see from these sketches that you have no talent." No studio would give him a job. He ended up doing publicity work for a church in an old, dilapidated garage.

\_\_\_\_\_ Writer: His first children's book was rejected by 23 publishers.

\_\_\_\_\_ Inventor: In the first year of marketing his new soft drink, he sold only 400 bottles.

\_\_\_\_\_ Actor: He went to Hollywood as an 18 year old, and after a couple of parts was unemployed for two years. As he ran out of money, he sold off his sectional couch, one section at a time, and lived on macaroni. He had no phone. His office was a phone booth at Pioneer Chicken.

\_\_\_\_\_ Athlete: As a baseball player, he struck out more than any player in the history of baseball: 1,330 times.

\_\_\_\_\_ Politician: Flunked the sixth grade. As a sixteen-year-old in Paris, a teacher had written on his report card, "*Shows a conspicuous lack of success.*" He wished to become a military leader, or a great statesman. As a student, he failed three times in his exams to enter the British Military Academy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Athlete: As a high school student, he felt so unpopular with the girls that he thought he might never be able to find a wife. That's why he took a cooking class. He thought he might never have anyone to cook for him.

Illustration Activity: Super Ball or Raw Egg



(A super ball is one of those very hard rubber balls that bounce so high.)

If you take a super ball and throw it against the wall, what happens to it?

What happens the harder you throw it against the wall?

What happens to a raw egg when you throw it against a wall?

What happens the harder you throw it against the wall?

This defines two types of people: raw egg people and *super ball* people. When raw egg people hit an obstacle, they splatter. The harder they hit, the harder they splatter, giving up on their goal. When super ball people hit an obstacle, they bounce back. The harder they hit, the harder they bounce back.

Discussion in Small Groups: . *Why do you think they kept bouncing back, whereas many people would have given up?*

Endurance - you'll never be successful without it. Do some of you feel the need for more of it in your own life? Perhaps academic work doesn't come easy for you. Perhaps your home life is in shambles and beneath your cool expression you're wondering if you'll ever make it in life.

Quality Circle or Group Discussion questions:

What are some challenges that a middle schooler faces?

What are some challenges that you have faced?

How did you confront the challenge?

What did you learn from this experience?

What obstacles did Sarah have to overcome?

What other choices could Sarah have chosen done to deal with what life gave her?

What about Sarah's story did you find inspirational? Why?

What lessons did you learn from Sarah's story?

## Follow-up Lesson #3 Overcoming Obstacles

Aim: How do you persevere when faced with obstacles?

Do Now: You can become either "bitter" or "better" events in life. And the only difference between these two words is the letter "I". "I" have the choice as to whether to grow or wither from what life gives me.

Activity: To illustrate this point, give the students a quick test. As the teacher reads the statements about each person (these are all real people), students will decide whether they think the person was a success or failure in his field. Write either the letter "F" for failure or "S" for success before each one

### SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

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\_\_\_\_\_ Athlete: As a high school student, he felt so unpopular with the girls that he thought he might never be able to find a wife. That's why he took a cooking class. He thought he might never have anyone to cook for him.

The answers to the test? Whether you answered success or failure, you all made a 100%! Each of these people were both failures and successes.

Let's look at these people, one by one.

*Allow a few students to guess before you reveal the answers.*

*Would you have given up on politics if you had been defeated 7 times in your run for political office? Any guesses as to who it was? I'm glad that Abraham Lincoln didn't give up. He was defeated for legislature, defeated for speaker, defeated for nomination to Congress, defeated for Senate, defeated for nomination to Vice Presidency, defeated again for Senate. Yet he hung in there and succeeded in becoming the 16<sup>th</sup>, and one of the most respected, presidents of the United States.*

*And what about the cartoonist whom no one would hire? The one who was told that he had no talent? The old garage he worked in was in such bad shape that it had mice. One day, he sketched one of those mice. Any guesses as to the name of that mouse? The mouse one day became famous as "Mickey Mouse." The artist, of course, was Walt Disney. The writer whose children's book was rejected by 23 publishers? Take a wild guess.... Dr. Seuss. By the way, the 24<sup>th</sup> publisher sold six million copies.*

*The soft drink that sold only 400 bottles its first year? Coca Cola.*

*The 18-year-old actor who couldn't land a part for two years and lived off macaroni? He finally got a part with a popular, long-running show called "Family Ties." I'm glad he didn't give up. Can you imagine "Back to the Future" without Michael J. Fox?*

*The baseball player who held the strike-out record? He also held, for many years, the home run record. His name is Babe Ruth.*

*The student who showed a "conspicuous lack of success" on his report card? Who failed three times to enter the British Military Academy? Many of us would have given up after one rejection. But Winston Churchill stubbornly refused to accept defeat and became one of the greatest men of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Though he was rejected many times by the voters of Great Britain, he finally became the Prime Minister, standing between Hitler and the free world.*

*The athlete who was so unpopular with the girls that he took a cooking class in case he never found a wife? The one who was cut from the Varsity team his sophomore year? The cut may have been the best thing that ever happened to him. Angry and embarrassed, he began to get up early each morning to practice with the Junior Varsity coach. Eventually he not only made the Varsity team, but became the most popular athlete in the world: Michael Jordan. (Sports Illustrated, Kids Edition, Aug/Sept, 1998)*

**Illustration Activity:** When I reflect on these people who refused to let their failures make them quit, I think of the difference between a super ball and a raw egg. (A super ball is one of those very hard rubber balls that bounce so high.) If you take a super ball and throw it against the wall, what happens to it? (It bounces back.) What happens the harder you throw it against the wall? (The faster it bounces back.) What happens to a raw egg when you throw it against a wall? (It splatters.) What happens the harder you throw it against the wall? (The worse it splatters.)

-This defines two types of people: raw egg people and *super ball* people. When raw egg people hit an obstacle, they splatter. The harder they hit, the harder they splatter, giving up on their goal. When super ball people hit an obstacle, they bounce back. The harder they hit, the harder they bounce back.

-Discussion in Small Groups: The people we just talked about were *super ball* people. With every failure, they kept bouncing back. Get with a couple of people around you and discuss this question. *Why do you think they kept bouncing back, whereas many people would have given up?* (Allow a few minutes for their insights.)

-Now, share with the class your thoughts. (Answers may include: #1 Their goals were extremely important to them. Some of our goals aren't really that important to us, so we give up easily. #2 They may have had tenacious, stubborn personalities. #3 Perhaps they had enough successes in their lives to balance out their failures. #4 They believed in themselves in spite of their failures.)

-Endurance - you'll never be successful without it. Do some of you feel the need for more of it in your own life? Perhaps academic work doesn't come easy for you. Perhaps your home life is in shambles and beneath your cool expression you're wondering if you'll ever make it in life.

-Next please put the desks in a circle or as close to a circle as possible for the quality circle. You can allow students to answer questions individually first if time permits. You can allow each student in the circle to give his/her answer or say pass.

**Quality Circle or Group Discussion questions:** What are some challenges that a middle schooler faces? What are some challenges that you have faced? How did you confront the challenge? What did you learn from this experience? What obstacles did Sarah have to overcome? What other choices could Sarah have chosen to deal with events in her life? What about Sarah's story did you find inspirational? Why? What lessons did you learn from Sarah's story? **Closing:** How can you help bring about positive change in your school?

If you want to really illustrate the point this can be an option  
**Object Lesson:** Since object lessons involve more senses than a verbal illustration, I like to choose a relevant object lesson. It won't soon be forgotten.

**Materials Needed:**

- Roll of large paper or plastic
- Masking Tape
- A super ball (check the entrance to Walmart in the gumball machines)
- Three raw eggs
- Two Tootsie Rolls (or other prize)

Tape a very large section of paper to the wall. Put another large paper on the floor to catch the broken egg. Draw a set of concentric circles on the wall paper, making a target. Without explaining the point of the illustration, get six volunteers. The first three take the super ball and throw it at the target, trying to get the closest to the center. Give the prize to the winner. The second three throw the raw eggs. Give the prize to the winner. Then, proceed to explain the object lesson as I have it written out to the left. (NOTE: Inevitably, an attention seeker may throw the egg outside of the paper on purpose; acting like it was a mistake. Don't let it frazzle you! Calmly reassure him that not everyone has good aim and assign him clean-up duty.)

**Aim:** Why is hard work important in life?

**Definition:** To work hard means you set high goals, stay focused on them, and then always give your best effort in trying to reach them.

**Do Now:** A hard working person I know is: \_\_\_\_\_

I thought of this person because:

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**A Real Life Story: Sarah Reinertsen:**

Sarah was born “different”. Her left leg deformed by a condition called proximal femoral focal deficiency (PFFD), Sarah wore a stiff, cumbersome leg brace until she was seven. At that point, the decision was made to amputate.

After the operation, Sarah tried to be like all her friends; she was a Brownie. She was a great student. She had a smile that lit up a room. But she could never overcome being “different”. And nowhere was that more apparent than in gym class. She came in last on field day. She was picked last for teams. Teachers and coaches refused to include her in regular play with the other kids. Instead, Sarah would kick a ball against the wall. Alone.

Life changed for Sarah when, at age 11, she competed in her first disabled track meet. Sarah lined up next to other girls missing limbs. When the gun went off for the 100 Meter dash, she ran hard and finished first. For the first time, she experienced the thrill of competition – and of winning and her life would never be the same.

Today, Sarah focuses on triathlons, where she has broken new ground and gone where no amputee woman has attempted before – the Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Hawaii (a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and 26.2-mile run.) In 2005, Sarah became the first woman to finish this grueling test on an artificial leg, finishing in a remarkable 15:05. In 2006, she was the first person with a physical challenge on the hit show, CBS's *Amazing Race*. Then in August of 2007, Sarah became a World Champion, winning gold in the Physically Challenged Olympic Distance World Championship in Hamburg Germany.

Now Sarah makes a living as a motivational speaker, showing others that no matter your challenge, you can achieve your dreams. She also acts as a CAF spokesperson sharing her knowledge and experience with kids and other challenged athletes.

### **What's Wrong Here?**

1. You did a group project in science. Your group decided what to do and divided up the jobs. You kept leaving your group to go talk to your friend who was part of another group.

What is wrong here?

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What **should** you have done?

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2. You saw someone's language book lying in the middle of the floor. As you walked by the book, you kicked it across the room.

What is wrong here?

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What **should** you have done?

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### **What Does This Mean?**

1. There is an old saying, when the going gets tough, the tough get going." What do those words mean to you? What do they say about hard work?

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2. Perhaps you have heard the statement "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, again. What does that statement mean to you? What does it have to do with hard work?

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**QUOTE: *If one dream should fall and break into a thousand pieces, never be afraid to pick one of those pieces up and begin again". Flavia Weedn.***

Reflecting on the quote, answer the following questions:

1. What was a difficulty that you have faced?

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2. How did you feel as a result of the difficulty?

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3. Did you give up? Why or Why not?

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4. What will you do in the future if you face a similar difficulty?

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5. What did you learn from this difficulty?(i.e. strengths, attitude)

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## Are You A Hard Worker?

How well do the following statements describe you? Put an X at the point on the line that best describes how you feel.

(a) I enjoy working hard at a task.

Not at all like me \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_ Very much like me

b) I enjoy difficult, challenging tasks.

Not at all like me \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_ Very much like me

c) I am always well prepared, and I “keep up” when I have work to do.

Not at all like me \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_ Very much like me

d) I always try to do a little better each time I work at a job.

Not at all like me \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_ Very much like me

e) I feel good about myself after I have worked hard at a job.

Not at all like me \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_ Very much like me

f) I keep on working hard even if the job gets tough.

Not at all like me \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_/ \_\_\_ Very much like me

### Doing What Needs To Be Done:

Part of being a hard worker is jumping in and doing a job that needs to be done. If you see a game lying on the table at home and you know it needs to be put away, which of the following should you do (check the answer you think is best)?

\_\_\_ Leave the game where it is.

\_\_\_ Let someone else put the game away.

\_\_\_ Push the game off the table and out of your way.

\_\_\_ Yell at the person who left the game out.

\_\_\_ Put the game away only after being asked by your parents to do so.

\_\_\_ Put the game away without having to be asked to do so.

Why did you answer as you did?

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### Closure:

Values, morals, ethics, and hard work are discussions that should be part of your family conversations. It is important that you take the time to find out what your parents, guardians, siblings and others feel about these important issues.

**Take Home Activity:**

This exercise will help facilitate conversation about *the value of hard work*. Find out people think.

What are some specific ways your parents think you work hard?

a) At home:

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b) At school:

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What are some specific ways you think your parents work hard?

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What are some specific ways you think you can improve your work ethic?

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(Parent Signature)