

Courage

This is the first week of our Courage unit. Students will focus on courage and how it connects to the sub concept of vulnerability when we take risks to be true to ourselves.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes



Identity Round Robin

Students will review the concepts of courage and vulnerability and practice these concepts by answering increasingly more difficult questions about themselves with their peers. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Staying True to YOU

Divide class into small groups of 4-6. Using the scenarios provided (see below), have each small group create a role-play to demonstrate how to use both vulnerability and courage to stay true to themselves.

For Partners
15 minutes



Hidden Talents

With your partner, share a hidden talent you have. Try to focus on something many people don't know about you! It takes courage to be vulnerable when discussing what makes you unique!

For Individuals
15 minutes



Facing Fears

Make a list of 5 things that scare you. What do they all have in common (loss of control, fear of large crowds, being judged, etc)? Write one positive affirmation to help you combat these fears and use courage moving forward. Here is a sentence starter if needed: I will _____ to help me _____.

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Personal Avatar

Create your own avatar. Many avatars we can select within games and programs are super limited! If you could design an avatar that captured your unique, one of a kind specialness, what would it look like? Share your avatar with the class and explain your choices.

Identity Round Robin

Students will review the concepts of courage and vulnerability and practice these concepts by answering increasingly more difficult questions about themselves with their peers.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- No materials are required for this lesson

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Explore the connection between courage and vulnerability.
- Examine what courage looks like within their own lives and how to incorporate a variety of courageous moments moving forward.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Welcome to the Courage unit, the last unit of the year! Great job working through this curriculum with your students! Think about everything they have learned and all of the ways you have seen them demonstrate respect, caring, inclusiveness, integrity, and responsibility throughout the year. Now you get to show them what courage and kindness look like. What a powerful combination! We might not naturally think about courage and kindness together, but in reality, kindness is the ultimate form of courage. It is the courage to be kind to ourselves and to others (especially if we don't feel like it). Do you need a shot of courage at this point in the year? Is it getting harder to be kind and patient?

Do you have added pressure to get everything finished by year's end? Would it be easier to simply coast through May and into June? Maybe. But, be strong and have courage; you will make it and so will your students. Walk bravely into the final weeks; pour an extra measure of kindness out to your students, especially the ones who have really hung in there all year long. They need your strength now more than ever. Be extra kind to yourself, too. You made it. You are doing it. Another year is nearly in the books and you are so much better for it. Think about all you have done, learned, and experienced. Take note of how it has changed your teaching approaches and mindset. How are you a better teacher today than you were at the start of the year? There is no one more courageous in your classroom than you. Embrace it and move bravely, kindly onward!



Share

5-7 minutes

We have arrived at our final unit of the year: Courage! Now that you have navigated middle school to completion, your daily experience with the need for courage is exponential! Many of you have found yourselves using courage as you stand up for what you believe in, help others that are being bullied or excluded, and even finding the strength to resist the temptation to participate in choices that go against your own beliefs or moral code.

Think back to a time when you were able to use courage in one of the mentioned situations. Share your example with a neighbor.

(Allow time for sharing.)



Inspire

4-6 minutes

These middle years are full of opportunities to exercise courage as we continue to increase our time away from our families and expand our social circles to a wider variety of people that share different beliefs and perspectives than ourselves.

One component that many people struggle with under the heading of courage is the concept of vulnerability. Although the focus of middle school years is often to figure out how to “fit in”, it takes courage to be willing to “stick out”, making yourself vulnerable to what others might think and say. Vulnerability is showing the world your true colors, what makes you special and unique, even when it might not match up directly with others around you. This includes both internal and external components of yourself. Your beliefs, your morals, your personal decisions in a variety of situations, and even the willingness to try something when others are reluctant are all different aspects of vulnerability. You are willing to take the risk that others might react negatively based on your decisions, but you are courageous enough to stay true to you, regardless of what others think or say!

Think about a time when you stayed true to you; maybe it was a fashion choice, a sport or activity no one else was doing, or a decision that didn't align with what others were doing. How did it feel to be that vulnerable? Did others react negatively? If so, how did you use courage to stay true to you?



Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now play a game called “Identity Round Robin” to practice both courage and vulnerability as each person shares personal information with the rest of the class. Questions start out easy and increase in vulnerability as the rounds continue.

Directions:

- Divide the class into two even groups. If there is an extra student, the teacher can participate.
- Have one group form a circle facing outside. Have the other group form a circle around them and stand facing the inner circle. Each person should have someone facing them from the other group.
- Explain that the teacher will read each question aloud. Each person will have 10-20 seconds to share their answers with the other person in front of them. The other person will then share their answer as well. Remember, this is your opportunity to practice using courage and honesty by being vulnerable. The questions will seem easy to answer at first, but will increase in vulnerability as we move forward.
- After everyone has had a chance to answer the question with their partner, the outside circle will move one person to the right.
- Repeat the activity with the next question.

Questions:

- Name your favorite food and why.
- Name your favorite sports team and why.
- Name your favorite band and why.
- Describe a time when you felt proud to be part of a cultural group.
- Describe a custom or tradition that is important to you.
- Describe a time when you were discriminated against.
- Describe how this part of your identity has influenced a recent decision or choice.
- What are some responsibilities you have to your family or friends?
- Describe how your family has influenced your identity or who you are.
- What is something kind someone has said about you?
- Describe another person or people who have influenced your identity.
- You can also write class-specific questions if desired!



Reflect

5-7 minutes

After finishing the activity, ask the following questions:

- Did you learn something new about someone that you didn't know before?
- Did anything you said to someone else surprise you?
- Was it difficult to answer any of the questions? Why or why not?
- How did you use courage to answer questions that were more difficult than others?
- What are some ways that we can respect other people's identities?
- How does learning about other people help us become more comfortable with being vulnerable ourselves?

This week challenge yourself to step out of your comfort zone in one area of your life. Take a risk and use courage to make yourself a little vulnerable when you stand up for something, try something new, or volunteer in a new area. Each act of courage empowers you to move forward and continue overcoming fears and challenging injustice.