

Courage

Syllables
cour•age

Pronunciation
kur-ij

Definition

Brave and strong.

(The firefighter showed a lot of courage when she ran into the burning building to save the baby.)

Simply put: Doing what's right even when it's dangerous.

Related Terms

Daring: Willing to face danger and take risks.

Fearless: Unafraid.

Valiant: Very brave when facing danger or pursuing a goal.

Fundamental Question:

How do you find the strength to stand up for what's right even when you find yourself standing alone?

Students will investigate the idea that ordinary people became extraordinary through their acts of courage.

Objectives

Each student will:

1. Investigate the events, victims, heroes, and feelings of a specific experience (depending on the nature, needs, and curriculum of your class, this might include the Revolutionary War, the Underground Railroad, the Holocaust, or 9/11);
2. Recognize people who risked their own safety to rescue others in this event; and
3. Identify traits common to heroes that (s)he would like to possess.

Before you begin

- Print out one copy of *Have Courage* for each student;
- On 3 x 5 index cards (see Procedure for number of cards needed), briefly describe several situations that would require a person to take a courageous stand against another person or group of people. (For example: Three fifth graders are teasing a second grader by tossing his lunch box around.); and
- Review your school's policy about students' Internet usage.

Note: Allow several days for the completion of this project.

Suggested Sidebars:

Speaking of Courage (Discussion Idea)

On the Polynesian island of Hikuera, to have courage and to be "fierce of heart" was considered everything. Read aloud and discuss the book *Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry.

Taking It to the Next Level

Stand up for something in which you believe. With your teacher's guidance, write a letter to the editor of your school or community newspaper explaining your position, even if it isn't the most popular one.

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Procedure

1. Show your students how to conduct research on the Web. (Remember: Tips about search engines and keywords are important, but Internet safety is, too.)
2. Assign an event based on the abilities, needs, and curriculum of your class. The topic should be one that allows your students to investigate the occurrences, victims, heroes, and feelings surrounding the event. Students may work on this individually or, if you would prefer, in teams of two or three.
3. Have the students present their findings in a creative or unique way. Dances, photo montages, video documentaries, poems ... anything that will allow the students to share a variety of facts and ideas about each of the four areas (occurrences, victims, heroes, and feelings) will work. (Suggestion: Let your kids shine! Invite parents and other guests in for the presentations.)
4. After the reports have been presented, discuss with class members and guests (and record responses on the board): "Identify some of the traits that almost all of the heroes we learned about today have in common."
5. Continue with: "Which one of these traits that we wrote on the board would you *most* like to possess? Why? Do you think that you already possess that trait? Explain your answer."
6. Say: "Tell about a time that you were afraid to say something because you thought others might disagree with you. How might the trait you selected help you with that problem?"
7. If research teams were not previously formed (see number 2, above), create teams of three now. Give an index card, on which has been written a situation that would require a person to take a courageous stand against another person or group, to a team. Ask a team member to read aloud what is on the card. The team will then have three minutes to role play some typical situations that require taking a courageous stand against a group or an individual. Assign a child who is not part of the role-playing team to be the "official clock watcher." Continue until each team has had a turn.
8. **Follow Up:** Distribute the *Have Courage* sheets. Ask the children to identify one of the heroes they learned about and to complete the page.

Name _____

Reminder: Courage means brave and strong.

Have Courage

Write the name of a hero: _____

How did this person become a hero? _____

Suppose you could ask your hero three important questions about courage. What would you ask?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Suppose you could tell your hero three things. What would you say?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Today's Thought: *Who has no courage must have legs.* – **Italian Proverb**