


What Is Courage? Building Character

Grades 3-5

Teacher's Guide


SUNBURST

What is Courage?

Building Character



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Sunburst Technology

Pleasantville, NY 10570

ISBN 0-7805-4520-6



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This program contains:

- 1 T eacher’s Guide, 10 Activity Sheets
- 1 videocassette (*approximately 15 minutes long*)
- 1 game
- 1 poster

Program Overview

Why Should Children View This Program?

Asked to define courage, children most often say it is risking your life in a dangerous situation to save someone, or standing up against tremendous odds to achieve something significant. But courage has other, more subtle meanings than the one represented by large, exaggerated acts of heroism. What children may not realize is that courage can also be apparent in the actions of ordinary individuals who find the willpower to show mettle, perseverance, resolution, and fortitude in everyday situations. Presenting the stories of three kids who, when faced with a choice, summoned up their courage and rose to the challenge, **What Is Courage? Building Character** helps students recognize that courage is not something we are born with, but comes from within us, from the choices we make.

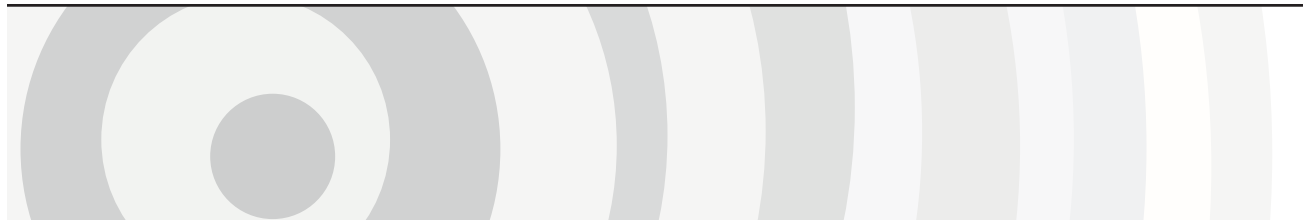
Learning Objectives

Children will:

- discover that there are many ways to demonstrate courage.
- learn the definition of several synonyms for courage.
- realize that small acts of courage can happen on a daily basis.
- understand that showing mettle, perseverance, resolution or fortitude in everyday situations can be as courageous as facing down danger.
- recognize that the right choice, at the right time, can make a difference.

Video Content

The program consists of three stories, each concerning an individual who is faced with a situation that requires a demonstration of courage. A host introduces each of the stories, makes clear what choices the main characters face, and shows why each choice takes courage.



Pre-Viewing Questions

- What's the first thing you think of when you hear the word "courage"?
- What are some examples of courage you have heard about? Can you think of any other examples?
- Does being courageous always involve taking risks? Why or why not?

Viewing the Video

Introduction

Host Will Bravado, crack reporter for the *Times*, opens the program by telling viewers about his new assignment, writing accounts for his paper of local kids who have demonstrated courage in some way. Courage is a pretty big topic, more than just bravery, Will explains, adding that it has lots of synonyms—mettle, fortitude, perseverance, and resolution are all examples. He goes on to introduce stories about three different kids who by their actions illustrate why these synonyms also represent courage.

Part 1—Mettle

Mallory has joined her school drama club's production of "Bluebeard the Pirate," but prefers setting up the lights, making the scenery, moving props, and operating the curtain to acting. However, on the afternoon before the performance, Michelle, who has one of the leads, comes down with the flu. Since Mallory has been practicing Michelle's part with Allen to help him learn his own lines, Mr. Hammons, the drama coach, and the rest of the cast want Mallory to take over the role. Protesting at first that she's needed behind the scenes, Mallory finally agrees, and gets through the dress rehearsal pretty well. But as performance time approaches, fear, doubt and pressure overwhelm her, and she tells Mr. Hammons she can't go on. Acknowledging Mallory's feelings as understandable, Mr. Hammons explains that everyone's depending on her. "It will take courage for you to go on," Mr. Hammons tells Mallory, "but I'm sure you can do it." At the last minute, Mallory faces down her fears and rises to the challenge, proving her mettle. An on-screen discussion question follows.

Part 2—Resolution and Perseverance

Displaying a newspaper headline that reads, "Resolution and Perseverance Pay Off for Animal Shelter," host Will Bravado defines these two synonyms for courage as making up your mind to achieve a goal



and not giving up, even in the face of defeat or failure. The story that follows illustrates that. Promised a puppy for his birthday, Alex finds that the animal shelter he's getting the puppy from is closing for lack of funds. Concerned about what will happen to the animals, Alex asks his father if something can be done. But neither the shelter director nor Alex's father can think of any way to save the shelter.

However, encouraged by his father, Alex and his friend Peter put their heads together to think up several ways to raise money, but the results are disappointing. Nevertheless, Alex refuses to give up. He and Peter enlist their schoolmates as helpers, and soon have a fairly large sum. But Alex knows they need to do more. The kids' new idea is to hold a pet picture contest and charge \$10 for each photo entry, a project that proves so popular that not only is lots of money raised, but the publicity generated by the contest sparks great community support for the shelter. As Will Bravado points out, Alex's perseverance and resolution really paid off. An on-screen discussion question follows.

Part 3—Fortitude

Telling viewers that his last story is about fortitude, Will Bravado explains that it means having the strength of mind to stand up for what you believe in. Kyra refuses to join her swimming teammates in making fun of a new girl, Melanie, whose stutter makes the other kids dissolve in fits of giggles.

Kyra asks Melanie to join her and the others after swim practice. Melanie happily agrees, but her happiness fades quickly when a team member imitates her stutter, and she walks away. Kyra is torn. She can't believe her friends could be so mean. Should she say nothing, or speak up and tell them that what they did was wrong? Even though she must endure their ridicule, she shows her fortitude by speaking up.

Courage isn't something you're born with, Will Bravado tells viewers. As each of these stories shows, he goes on, courage is a choice. It's something that's in each of us, so when you're faced with a choice of whether or not to do the right thing, he says, remember these stories.

Discussion Questions

Note to Teacher: Questions marked with an * appear on-screen at the end of the scenarios.

Part 1

- Will Bravado says that courage can mean a lot of different things. Name some of them.
- What does he say the word “mettle” means?
- Why do you think Mallory agreed at first to take over Michelle’s role? Why do you think she changed her mind?
- * Have you ever faced a challenge that required you to show courage like Mallory? What was it? What did you do?
- Were you afraid? Did you have doubts about your ability to meet this challenge? Did you feel pressure? What did you do to overcome these feelings?

Part 2–Resolution and Perseverance

- What does Will Bravado say “perseverance” and “resolution” mean?
- Why do you think Alex decided to make saving the shelter his goal? Should he have been discouraged that neither the shelter’s director nor his father could think of any way to save it? Why or why not?
- Alex had one idea after another for raising money, but the last one, the poster contest, brought in the biggest amounts. Why do you think this one worked?
- Do you think Alex and his friends would have been able to achieve their goal of saving the shelter if they hadn’t had a positive attitude?
- Alex did not get discouraged when his first fund-raising efforts didn’t pay off and when his sister didn’t encourage



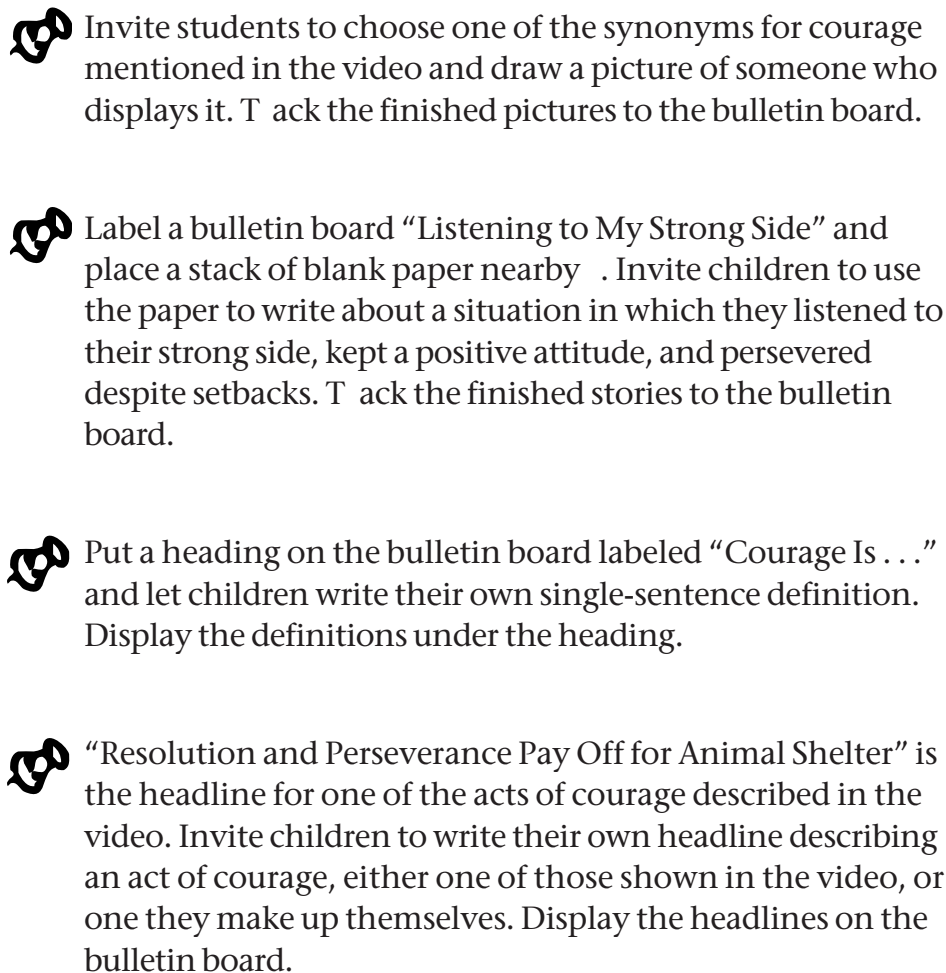




him to succeed. Discuss how the words “discourage” and “encourage” relate to courage.

- *Have you ever been in a situation where resolution and perseverance helped you achieve a goal? What was it? What did you do?

Part 3–Fortitude

- How does Will Bravado define the word “fortitude”?
- Have you ever been in a situation where a group of kids picked on one kid? Describe the situation. Was anyone willing to stand up for the victim? What was the outcome?
- Why do you think Kyra felt bad when the other kids made fun of Melanie?
- Why did Kyra feel torn? What did she think would happen if she spoke up in Melanie’s behalf?
- Discuss why it takes courage to stand up for what you believe is right.
- *Have you ever been in a situation that required you to show courage like Kyra? What was it? What did you do?
- Will Bravado says that courage is a choice that comes from within. Explain.

Bulletin Board Starters

- 
-  Invite students to choose one of the synonyms for courage mentioned in the video and draw a picture of someone who displays it. Tack the finished pictures to the bulletin board.
 -  Label a bulletin board “Listening to My Strong Side” and place a stack of blank paper nearby . Invite children to use the paper to write about a situation in which they listened to their strong side, kept a positive attitude, and persevered despite setbacks. Tack the finished stories to the bulletin board.
 -  Put a heading on the bulletin board labeled “Courage Is . . .” and let children write their own single-sentence definition. Display the definitions under the heading.
 -  “Resolution and Perseverance Pay Off for Animal Shelter” is the headline for one of the acts of courage described in the video. Invite children to write their own headline describing an act of courage, either one of those shown in the video, or one they make up themselves. Display the headlines on the bulletin board.

Suggested Activities

Language Arts

The video mentions four synonyms for courage found in a thesaurus: mettle, perseverance, resolution, and fortitude. But there are other equally good synonyms. Such words as spirit, tenacity, persistence, guts, fearlessness, intrepidity, self-reliance, resilience are some others. Ask children to choose any one of these synonyms, look up its meaning in a dictionary, and write a short story using it to share with the class.

Language Arts; Creative Writing


Ask children what they think is the meaning of the phrase “Courage is a choice.” Facilitate the discussion by helping them talk about why it takes courage to stand up alone for what you think is right. Have each child write a story about a real or imagined situation that called for this kind of courage. Have them describe what happened, what they did about it, and if they did nothing, what they now wished they had done about it. If students wish, have them share their stories with the class.

Art; Creative Expression

Television cartoons for children often depict feats of derring-do in which “superheroes” miraculously jump through windows or across rooftops, walk through fire, or engage in high-speed chases, always escaping unharmed. Have children create their own four-panel cartoons, using balloon dialogue and featuring a superhero who performs a small but realistic act of courage in an everyday situation. Such situations might be standing up to a bully, including a shy new classmate in a group’s activities, resisting pressure to do something dangerous, disagreeing with someone and risking that person’s friendship, and so on. Display the finished cartoons on the bulletin board.

Language Arts; Problem-Solving

On the chalkboard, write the words, “It would take courage to...” Hand out an index card to each child and have them



write a sentence or two about a problem that requires courage to solve. Collect the cards in a basket, shuffle them, and let each child pick one card. Have them use the back of their card to suggest a solution to the problem and why courage would be necessary for its solution.

Current Events; News Stories

Ask children to bring in a story they find in their local newspaper that tells about someone rising to a challenge, or persevering despite obstacles, or speaking up against some injustice. Have children share their articles with classmates.

Art; Creative Expression

Distribute poster board or oaktag and ask children to create their own posters showing the kinds of behavior that demonstrate courage: standing up for one's values, refusing to go along with the crowd in doing something dangerous, speaking out against a bully, and so on. Display the posters on the bulletin board or classroom walls.

Language Arts; Reading

Ask each child to select and read one of the books of fiction on page 28, or one on the subject of courage recommended by their school or local librarian, and give a written or oral report to the class. Tell children that as they read they should think about the following questions:

- What were the obstacles the main character in the story faced?
- How did this person deal with his or her fears?
- In what ways did this person show courage?
- What would have happened if this person had failed to show courage?
- What do you admire most about the story?

Send-Home Page



Dear Family Member:

Your child viewed a program called **What Is Courage? Building Character**. This video helps children understand that courage is not confined to people who perform extraordinary acts of bravery, but can also be found in individuals who act courageously in ordinary, everyday situations. Here are some points about courage that your child learned from the video:

- There are many synonyms for courage: some examples are mettle, perseverance, resolution, fortitude, spirit, guts, strength of mind.
- There are many ways to demonstrate courage.
- Courage is not something we are born with. It comes from within, from the choices we make.
- Some of these choices are overcoming fear and doubt and rising to a challenge, persevering in pursuit of a personal goal despite the threat of failure or defeat, and standing up for what you believe is right.

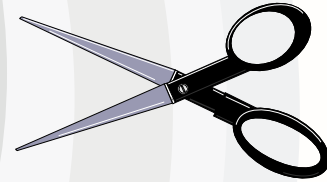
Here are some ways to engage your child in a discussion of courage and its meaning in everyday life:

- Introduce the topic: Ask, “What’s the first thing you think of when you hear the word ‘courage’?”
- Talk about someone you admire for the extraordinary courage he or she showed in his or her life. This could be an historical person, like Mahatma Gandhi, or a sports hero like Lou Gehrig or Jackie Robinson, or someone who stood up for what was right, people like Martin Luther King, Jr. or Rosa Parks. But it also might be someone in your family, or someone you read about like the thousands of people who displayed acts of courage after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.
- Talk about a time when there were challenges in your life that called for courage, when you: overcame your fears or doubts and found you could do something you didn’t think you could do; persevered despite the threat of defeat or failure; or stood up for something you knew was right.
- Describe the pressure you felt in the situation. You had a choice: you could do nothing, or you could rise to the challenge and make a difference.
- Together with your child, read books that focus on the theme of courage. Here are two you might use:

Naylor, Patricia Reynolds. *One of the Third-Grade Thinkers*. Macmillan, 1988.

Shreve, Susan. *Joshua T. Bates Takes Charge*. Knopf, 1993.

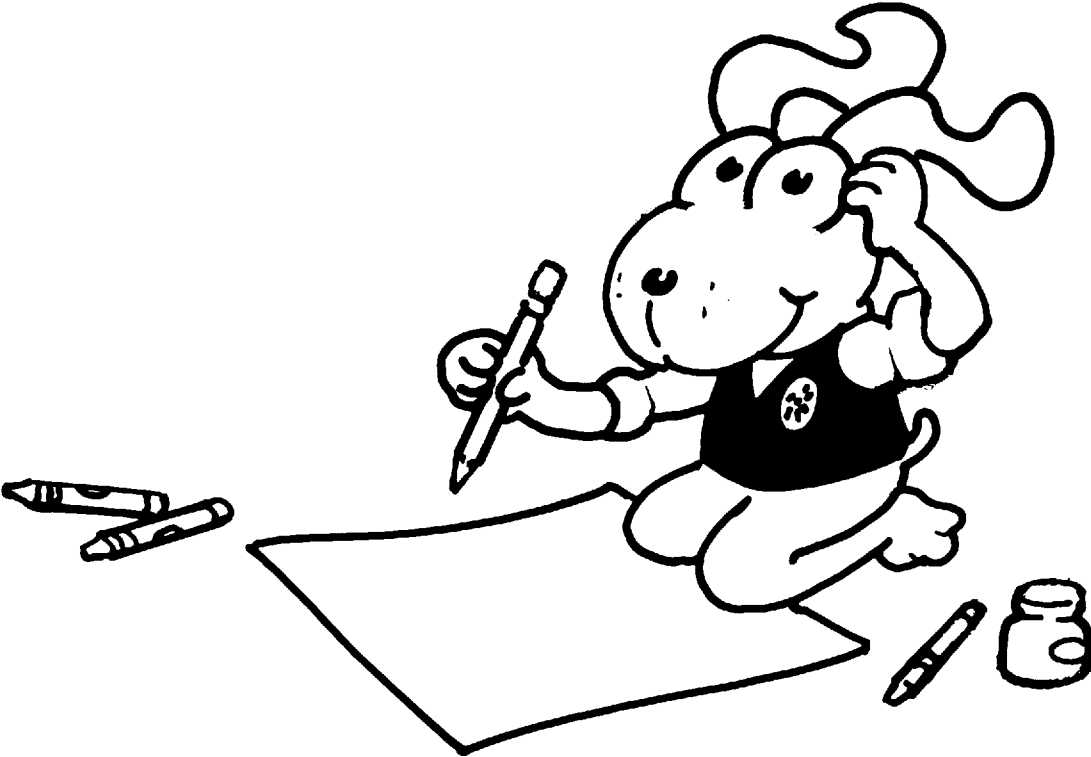
Take-Home Book



Cut along the lines and staple the parts of the page together .
Then draw pictures to go with the words.

1 Tammy's friends were laughing at Sara.	2 They made fun of Sara's bathing suit.
3 Tammy felt bad. She asked them to stop.	4 But they wouldn't stop. Tammy couldn't believe they could be so mean.
5 Tammy had to choose between her friends and standing up for Sara.	6 She chose to stand up for Sara.

Activity Sheets



What Is Courage?

Look up the word **courage** in the dictionary. Write the definition below.

Give some examples of **courage**:

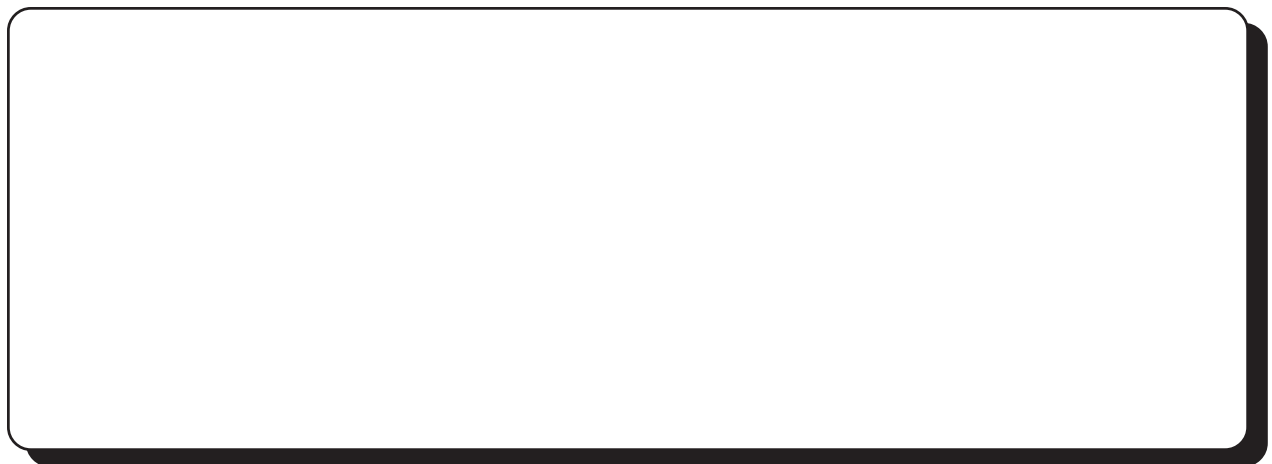
1. _____
2. _____

Courage comes from the Latin word *cor*, meaning “heart.” It is also part of the words “encourage” and “discourage.”

To **encourage** someone is to give them “heart,” to hearten them. The prefix “en-” means “put into.”

To **discourage** someone is to take away their “heart,” to dishearten them. The prefix “dis-” means “take away.”

In the space below, draw a picture of two hearts, one full of encouragement, the other discouraged.



It Takes C-O-U-R-A-G-E

In each of the following situations, circle the degree of courage you think you would need to rise to the challenge, then write one or two sentences telling why.

How much courage would it take for you to:

- tell your best friend to stop teasing a new classmate?

a little some a lot

- try a new activity that you've never tried before?

a little some a lot

- refuse to go along when friends are planning something dangerous?

a little some a lot

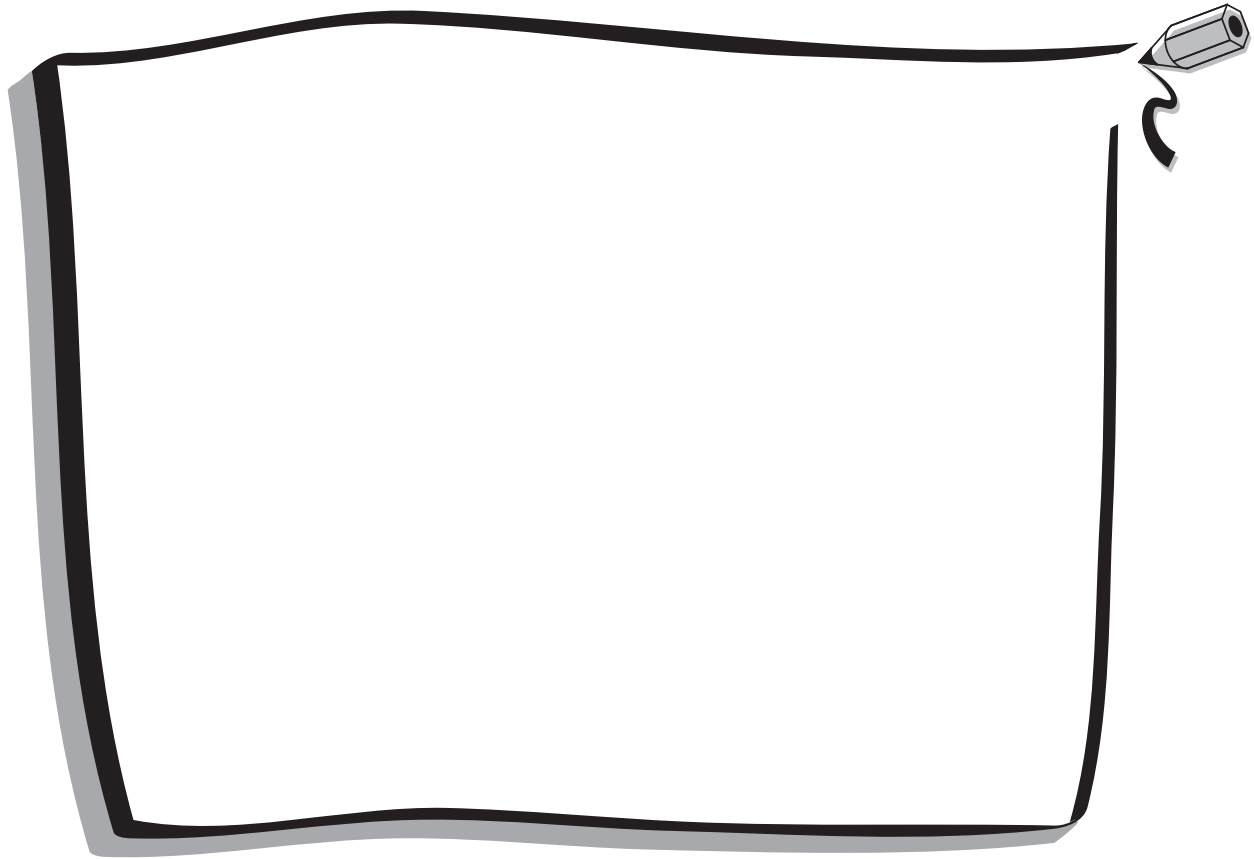
- disagree with someone and risk losing that person's friendship?

a little some a lot

Courage: What Does It Look Like?

Courage can mean a lot of different things. It can mean rising to a challenge, persevering in pursuit of a goal, standing up for what we believe in, and more.

Suppose you wanted to draw what courage looks like. What shape or form would you give it? Would it be a superhero? A fierce tiger? A star with a steady beam? What colors would you use? In the space below, draw and color your image of what courage looks like. Then write a few lines describing why you chose that image.



The Five W's and H: Mallory's Story

When reporters like Will Bravado write up a news story, they use the **Five W's** and the "**H**" – **Who, What, Where, When, Why** and **How**—to give their readers the facts. The words and phrases in the word box relate to Mallory's story. Use them to fill in the sentence blanks.

backstage

fear

leading role

actor

rose to the challenge

performance

show

step in

courage

drama teacher

dress rehearsal

Mallory joined her drama club's play, "Bluebeard the Pirate," as a _____ helper. She didn't want to be an _____. But Michelle, who had a _____ in the play, got sick the day before the _____. Because Mallory had rehearsed Michelle's part with Allen, the _____ asked her to _____ and take over Michelle's role. Mallory got through the _____ just fine.

But just before the _____ was about to start, Mallory began to be filled with _____. With the help of the drama teacher, Mallory found the _____ to conquer her fear, _____, and did a great job.



Now draw a picture on the back of this page, showing how Mallory felt about herself when the play was over.

The Five W's and H: Mallory's Story

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backstage

fear

leading role

actor

rose to the challenge

performance

show

step in

courage

drama teacher

dress rehearsal

Mallory joined her drama club's play, "Bluebeard the Pirate," as a backstage helper. She didn't want to be an actor. But Michelle, who had a leading role in the play, got sick the day before the performance. Because Mallory had rehearsed Michelle's part with Allen, the drama teacher asked her to step in and take over Michelle's role. Mallory got through the dress rehearsal just fine.

But just before the show was about to start, Mallory began to be filled with fear. With the help of the drama teacher, Mallory found the courage to conquer her fear, rose to the challenge, and did a great job.



Now draw a picture on the back of this page, showing how Mallory felt about herself when the play was over.

The Five W's and H: Alex's Story

The words and phrases in the word box relate to Alex's story. Use them to fill in the sentence blanks to describe the **Who, What, Where, When, Why** and **How** of his story.

collection jars

perseverance

posters

puppy

money

hopeless

positive attitude

shelter director

animal shelter

newspapers

contest

goal

Alex saved his local _____ from closing by raising enough _____ to keep it open.

While at the shelter with his father to pick out a _____ for his birthday, Alex learned from the _____ that the shelter was closing for lack of money. Concerned about what would happen to the other animals, Alex decided to make it his _____ to save the shelter. With his friend Peter, Alex put _____ in local stores and collected empty cans and bottles for recycling. But they still didn't have enough money. Told that the situation was _____, Alex persevered and kept a _____. Then Alex and his friends thought up a pet picture _____. They made _____ to put around town. The contest was written up in the _____ and got lots of publicity and money. Because Alex showed _____, the shelter was saved.



Now draw a picture on the back of this page showing how Alex felt about himself after saving the shelter.

The Five W's and H: Alex's Story

The words and phrases in the word box relate to Alex's story. Use them to fill in the sentence blanks to describe the **Who, What, Where, When, Why** and **How** of his story.

collection jars

perseverance

posters

puppy

money

hopeless

positive attitude

shelter director

animal shelter

newspapers

contest

goal

Alex saved his local animal shelter from closing by raising enough money to keep it open.

While at the shelter with his father to pick out a puppy for his birthday, Alex learned from the shelter director that the shelter was closing for lack of money. Concerned about what would happen to the other animals, Alex decided to make it his goal to save the shelter. With his friend Peter, Alex put collection jars in local stores and collected empty cans and bottles for recycling. But they still didn't have enough money. Told that the situation was hopeless, Alex persevered and kept a positive attitude. Then Alex and his friends thought up a pet picture contest. They made posters to put around town. The contest was written up in the newspapers and got lots of publicity and money. Because Alex showed perseverance, the shelter was saved.



Now draw a picture on the back of this page showing how Alex felt about himself after saving the shelter.

The Five W's and H: Kyra's Story

The words and phrases in the word box relate to Kyra's story. Use them to fill in the sentence blanks to describe the **Who, What, Where, When, Why** and **How** of her story.

teammates	fortitude	stutter	strength of mind
play	believed	mean	choice
people	felt bad	new girl	friends

Kyra showed her courage by standing up for what she _____ was right. Her _____ on the swimming team saw the _____, Melanie. When they discovered Melanie had a _____, they started making fun of her. Kyra _____ for Melanie. She invited Melanie to _____, but her _____ kept imitating Melanie's stutter. Showing great _____, Kyra told her friends they were _____ and shouldn't make fun of _____. Kyra had made her _____. She stood up alone against her friends, proving her _____.



Now draw a picture on the back of this page, showing how Kyra about herself when she stood up to her friends.

The Five W's and H: Kyra's Story

The words and phrases in the word box relate to Kyra's story. Use them to fill in the sentence blanks to describe the **Who, What, Where, When, Why** and **How** of her story.

teammates	fortitude	stutter	strength of mind
play	believed	mean	choice
people	felt bad	new girl	friends

Kyra showed her courage by standing up for what she believed was right. Her teammates on the swimming team saw the new girl, Melanie. When they discovered Melanie had a stutter, they started making fun of her. Kyra felt bad for Melanie. She invited Melanie to play, but her friends kept imitating Melanie's stutter. Showing great strength of mind, Kyra told her friends they were mean and shouldn't make fun of people. Kyra had made her choice. She stood up alone against her friends, proving her fortitude.



Now draw a picture on the back of this page, showing how Kyra about herself when she stood up to her friends.

Hidden Words

All the words in the wordbox are hiding in the puzzle below.
Circle each word that you find. Words can be found horizontally, vertically, and diagonally.



C	O	U	R	A	G	E	P	S	W	S	K	P
H	H	Y	O	S	M	N	E	P	Y	R	V	E
A	F	O	D	A	I	C	R	I	E	A	R	R
L	O	D	I	S	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	S
L	R	U	C	C	D	U	V	I	N	V	S	E
E	T	L	T	L	E	R	O	T	O	A	O	V
N	I	J	I	X	W	A	A	T	J	L	L	E
G	T	M	O	H	F	G	K	H	G	U	U	R
E	U	E	N	L	M	E	T	T	L	E	T	A
W	D	G	A	D	O	B	L	A	A	S	I	N
B	E	O	R	E	R	O	D	N	E	A	O	C
P	G	S	Y	S	T	A	N	D	U	P	N	E

WORD BOX

courage

mettle

dictionary

resolution

perseverance

discourage

spirit

encourage

fortitude

challenge

choice

stand up

goal

values

Name:

Date:

Activity Sheet 10
ANSWER KEY

Hidden Words

All the words in the wordbox are hiding in the puzzle below.
Circle each word that you find. Words can be found horizontally, vertically, and diagonally.



C	O	U	R	A	G	E	P	S	W	S	K	P
H	H	Y	O	S	M	N	E	P	Y	R	V	E
A	F	O	D	A	I	C	R	I	E	A	R	R
L	O	D	I	S	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	S
L	R	U	C	C	D	U	V	I	N	V	S	E
E	T	L	T	L	E	R	O	T	O	A	O	V
N	I	J	I	X	W	A	A	T	J	L	L	E
G	T	M	O	H	F	G	K	H	G	U	U	R
E	U	E	N	L	M	E	T	T	L	E	T	A
W	D	G	A	D	O	B	L	A	A	S	I	N
B	E	O	R	E	R	O	D	N	E	A	O	C
P	G	S	Y	S	T	A	N	D	U	P	N	E

WORD BOX

courage

mettle

dictionary

resolution

perseverance

discourage

spirit

encourage

fortitude

challenge

choice

stand up

goal

values

Suggested Reading

Reading for Educators and Parents

Clavin, Thomas. "Young Heroes." *Woman's Day*, February 18, 1997. Stories of surprising heroism by children ranging in age from 3 to 16.

Humphrey, Sandra McLeod. *If You Had to Choose, What Would You Do?* Prometheus Books, 1995. For parents to use with their kids to introduce and begin talking about personal values and how to develop their own code of moral conduct.

Kurshan, Neil. *Raising Your Child to Be a Mensch*. Atheneum, 1987. Guidance, encouragement, and hope for parents who want to raise children with the backbone to say no, the nerve to say yes, and the self-confidence and strength of character to make hard decisions and stand firm.

Stilwell, Barbara M., M.D. *Right vs. Wrong: Raising a Child With a Conscience*. Indiana University Press, 2000. A guide for parents for helping their children build conscience-building strategies; describes how conscience becomes an internal authority and how children learn to sense and evaluate the moral issues in new situations.

Fiction for Grades 3 to 5

Baum, L. Frank. *The Wizard of Oz*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1982. The classic story of Dorothy and her adventures in the Emerald City with the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion offers a host of opportunities to talk about different kinds of courage.

Duey, Kathleen. *Celou Sudden Short: Idaho, 1827*. Aladdin Paperback, 1998. A heroic Indian girl struggles to save the life of a boy held captive by another tribe of Indians.



Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Fish Face*. Dell Yearling, 1984. Having discovered that a classmate is a thief, Emily must decide what to do.

King-Smith, Dick. *Babe the Gallant Pig*. Dell Paperback, 1988. Young piglet Babe faces many obstacles upon arrival at Farmer Hogget's farm, but armed with courage and determination, overcomes them all.

Lindberg, Becky T. *Speak Up, Chelsea Martin!* Whitman, 1992. Encouraged by her mother, Chelsea decides to speak up for herself and deal with the consequences.

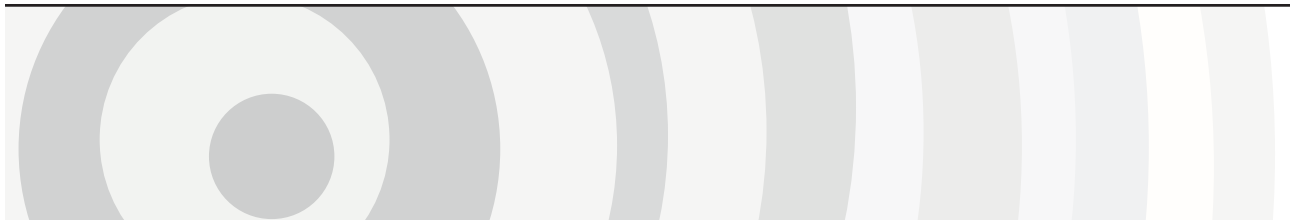
Mauser, Pat Rhoads. *A Bundle of Sticks*. Macmillan, 1987. Bullied at school, fifth-grader Boyd learns martial arts techniques that allow him not only to defend himself but to decide when not to fight.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *One of the Third-Grade Thinkers*. Macmillan, 1988. Jimmy, who with his third-grade pals loves to engage in feats of daring, learns through a wreck on the Mississippi what bravery is really about.

O'Dell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Yearling Books, 1987. A Newbury Medal Winner that tells the simple but riveting tale of a young American Indian girl's courage in surviving alone on an island for 18 years.

Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. Harper's Children's Books, 1987. A beautifully written and emotionally powerful story about a friendship that encompasses truth, love and courage. A Newbury Medal Winner.

Shreve, Susan. *Joshua T. Bates Takes Charge*. Knopf, 1993. A story about a typical boy's struggle to fit in and his decision to stand up for what he thinks is right.



Slepian, Jan. *The Alfred Summer*. Philomel Books, 2001. A group of young adolescents discover that there are as many levels of heroism and many definitions of “special.”

Sperry, Armstrong. *Call It Courage*. Aladdin Reprint, 1990. In this Newbury Medal Classic, Mafatu, a 12-year-old Polynesian boy whose mother drowned in a hurricane, is forced to call on all his courage to conquer his fear of the sea.

Treffinger, Carolyn. *Li Lun, Lad of Courage*. Walker & Co., 1995. Newbury Honor Roll Winner.

Wallace, Bill. *Eye of the Great Bear*. Minstrel Books, 1999. Called a coward because he jumps at everything, eleven-year-old Bailey somehow summons up the courage to make a decision that puts his life at risk

Wallace, Bill. *Red Dog*. Holiday House, 1987. In this heartwarming story set in the Wyoming Territory in the 1860s, a young boy and his courageous dog manage to triumph over evil.

Whalen, Gloria. *Homeless Bird*. HC Children’s Books, 2000. Married at 13 and promptly widowed, the courageous and spirited Loly’s future life in India seems hopeless until she finds a way to forge her own destiny.

Nonfiction for Grades 3 to 5

Golenbock, Peter. *Teammates*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990. The true story of baseball great Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to play Major League baseball, and his white teammate PeeWee Reese, both of whom showed tremendous courage in response to racial discrimination.



Lewis, Barbara A. *What Do You Stand For? A Kid's Guide to Building Character*. Free Spirit Publishing, 1997. Helps students think about, discuss, and debate positive traits.

Masters, Anthony. *Heroic Stories*. Kingfisher Books, 1994. Biographical accounts of 23 heroes and the qualities that enabled them to respond courageously when called on to do so.

Millman, Dan. *Secret of the Peaceful Warrior: A Story About Courage and Love*. H.J. Kramer, 1991. An inspirational story about a boy who finds the courage to deal with a bully.

Murray, Kirsty. *What Kids Are Made Of: True Stories of Rescuers, Rulers, and Rebels*. Chicago Review Press, 2000. Inspiring stories about the amazing things some kids have done.

Schwartz, Linda. *What Do You Think? A Kid's Guide to Dealing With Daily Dilemmas*. Learning Works, 1993. Shows students how to approach dilemmas for which there are no pat and perfect solutions.

Schwartz, Linda. *What Would You Do? A Kid's Guide to Tricky and Sticky Situations*. Learning Works, 1991. Help for kids who find themselves in some common and not-so-common situations.

Related Materials from Sunburst

"You Can Try, So Can I"

13-minute video for Grades 3 to 5

"Should I Speak Up? Building Character"

16-minute video for Grades 3 to 5

"Set Your Own Goals"

18-minute video for Grades 3 to 5

"Heroes of Today and Yesterday: Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights Movement"

24-minute video for Grades 3 to 8



Online Resource

Warburg Courage Curriculum

A language-arts curriculum, based on the value of courage, that promotes literacy by encouraging students and teachers to write and discuss courage within literature:

<http://www.maxcourage.org>

Script

What Is Courage? Building Character

Host

Hi there, the name's Bravado, Will Bravado, crack newspaper reporter for the Times. I was recently given an assignment by my editor. She wanted me to do a story on kids in our town who've displayed acts of courage. It's going to be in tomorrow's paper—but I wanted to give you an exclusive, behind the scenes look at what I found.

Now courage—that's a pretty big topic. And, of course, the first thing you think of when you hear the word courage is bravery. But that doesn't really tell you a lot. So, I decided to start my investigation with a quick glance at the old thesaurus. It's like a dictionary, but instead of giving you definitions, it gives you synonyms—words that mean the same.

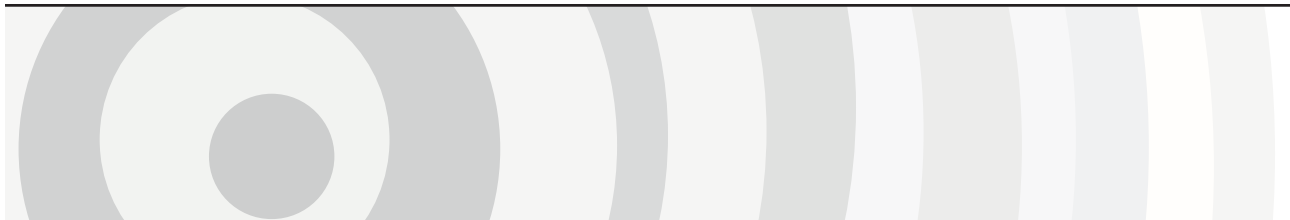
And what I discovered is that there are a lot of synonyms for courage, because courage can mean a lot of different things.

When I looked up courage in the thesaurus, the first synonym I found was mettle. Mettle means spirit, daring, guts. It's rising to meet a challenge. My search for a story about courage and mettle took me to the Northside Community Center and a girl named Mallory.

Mallory's story of courage began when she decided to join the drama club at the local community center. A few of her friends belonged and it seemed like fun. They were putting on a play about "Blue Beard the Pirate." Now Mallory wasn't an actor. She was one of the backstage helpers. She set up the lights, helped make the scenery, moved props, and operated the curtain. That's what she liked to do. At the last rehearsal, the afternoon before the performance, the kids got some bad news from Mr. Hammons, who ran the drama group.

Mr. Hammons

Can I have everybody stop for one second and listen up, please.



I just got off the phone with Michelle Davis's mom. Michelle has the flu. She won't be able to be in the play tonight.

Joey

But she has one of the biggest parts.

Allison

What are we gonna do?

Mr. Hammons

Well, we are going to have to get someone to step in and be ready for tonight. Now, who knows all Michelle's lines?

Allen

Mallory does.

Mallory

Me?

Allen

You did her whole part with me.

Mallory

I was just helping you rehearse.

Allen

So. You still know the whole part.

Mallory

I was just fooling around. I'm not an actor.

Mr. Hammons

Well, we are going to need someone to set up.



Jackie

C'mon, Mallory.

Mallory

Who'll do the curtains?

Sam

I will. I'm backstage anyway.

Mr. Hammons

What do you say, Mallory?

Allen

We need you.

Mallory

Ummm...I guess.

Mr. Hammons

Wonderful! We'll get you into a costume right away. Okay. You can also hold the script during the dress rehearsal.

Host

So Mallory gave it a try. And she was pretty good at dress rehearsal.

But later on, a little fear and doubt set in.

Mr. Hammons

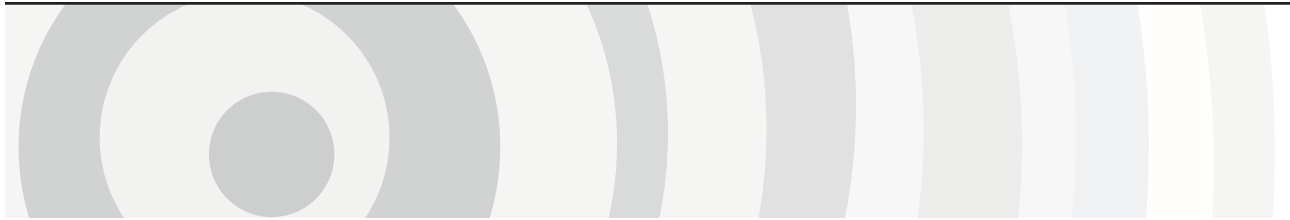
Mallory, I think you did a great a job.

Mallory

Really? Because right now, I don't think I can do it again.

Mr. Hammons

Why?



Mallory

I only had one practice. I think you should get someone else.

Mr. Hammons

Well the truth is—there is no one else to get. And I know you can do it. Everyone’s worked so hard on this play. I’d hate to see them all disappointed.

Mallory

I know. But I already have a stomachache just thinking about being in front of all those people.

Mr. Hammons

I can understand that. Getting up in front of an audience is one of the hardest things to do.

Mallory

I’ve never been in a play before.

Mr. Hammons

Trying something new like this is always scary.

Mallory

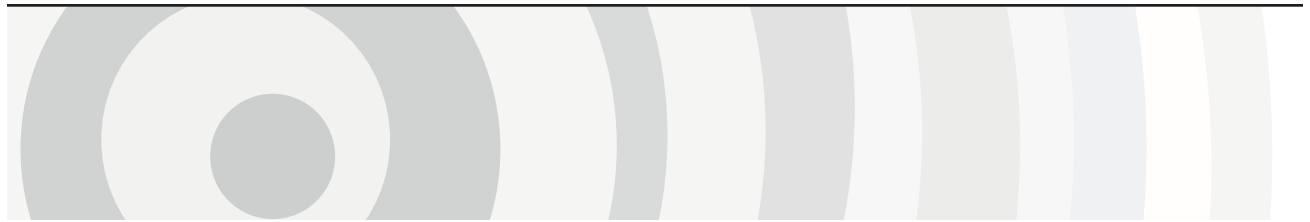
I feel a lot of pressure right now.

Mr. Hammons

That’s understandable. There *is* a lot of pressure. And everyone’s depending on you. But it takes courage to do what you’re going to do tonight...there’s no doubt about it. But you know what, I bet you can do it.

Host

Fear, doubt, pressure—are normal feelings everyone has. Mallory had to face those feelings and that takes mettle. The spirit to rise up and meet a challenge. And Mallory did just that. How’d she do in the play?



Well, she did great and actually had a good time.

And she learned one very important thing—that having courage doesn't mean you that aren't afraid or have doubts or feel pressure. Having courage means you can face a challenge and do your best in spite of your fear.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

- Have you ever faced a challenge that required you to show courage like Mallory? What was it and what did you do?

• • • •

Host

My next story about courage deals with Resolution and Perseverance. That means making up your mind to achieve a personal goal—and not giving up. To carry on and keep going—all with a positive attitude—even if you face defeat and failure.

I found a story about that kind of courage in a most surprising place—our local animal shelter. The story begins with Alex. He's this one over here with the dog.

Alex wanted a dog for his birthday. So he and his dad went to the shelter to pick one out.

Just as they were leaving, Alex noticed a sign on the door that said the shelter was closing.

Alex

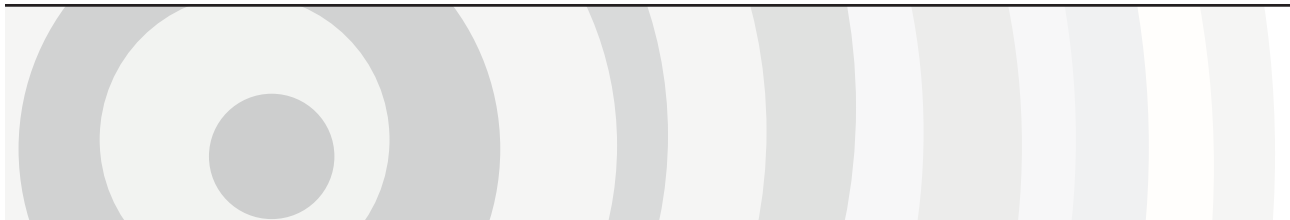
How come you're closing?

Director

Well, we just don't have the money to keep the shelter open anymore.

Alex

What'll happen to all the animals?



Director

Well, hopefully, we'll find good homes for all of them.

Alex

What if you don't? Can't you get the money?

Director

Well, we've tried all kinds of fundraisers. I mean we are a volunteer organization, and it just doesn't seem like we can find the resources to stay open.

Alex

Maybe there's something we can do. Can't we, Dad?

Dad

Well, I'm sure if Mrs. McCormick says she's tried everything, there's not a lot we can do.

Director

We close at the end of the month. It seems like there's little anyone can do anymore

Host

Well, for most people that would be the end of it. But not Alex. He made up his mind right then and there that he'd try to find a way to help the shelter.

Alex

It's terrible that the shelter is going to close.

Dad

Well, sometimes things like that happen.

Alex

I wish there were something we could do.



Dad

I don't know, Alex. It would take a lot of time and effort.

Alex

Maybe I could try.

Dad

I'm not sure what you can do. But if you think of something—go for it.

Host

The first thing Alex did was to talk his friend Peter. He always had good ideas.

Peter

What do you think about setting up jars for money in some stores?

Alex

That's a great idea. We can make labels on the computer asking for donations.

Peter

And we can collect cans and bottles—and get money that way, too.

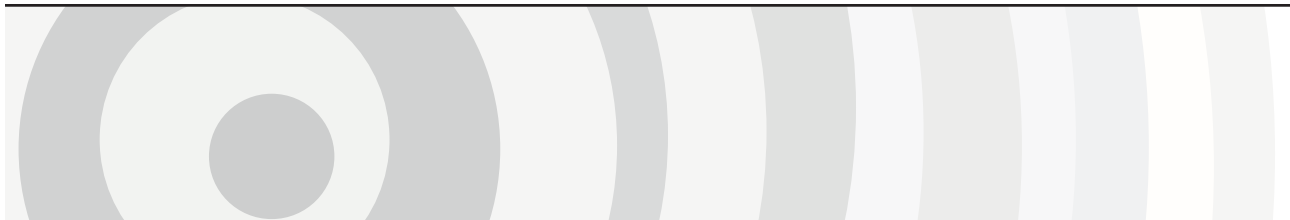
Alex

Let's start right away!

Host

So Alex and Peter got to work. They brought jars to some stores. But only a few would accept them.

They also collected bottles and cans from their neighbors. After five days, they counted how much money they made.



Peter

Well, that's the last one. How did we do?

Alex

Our grand total is \$9.80. How was our collecting of the stores?

Peter

Not so good. Just a few quarters and some pennies.

Sister

How'd you do?

Peter

Not so hot.

Sister

It's hopeless.

Alex

No, it's not!

Sister

You guys are just wasting your time. You think if all those people couldn't save the shelter, you think you two are gonna do it! Yeah, right.

Host

But Alex and Peter wouldn't give up. The first thing they realized was that they needed more help. So they got on the Internet and put out the word to other kids in their school. Pretty soon, there were lots of kids working on raising money for the animal shelter. They all collected bottles and cans, and they were able to set up their jars in more stores. By the end of the second week, they had raised much more money.



Alex

So how much is that?

Peter

Just about \$232.

Alex

That's sounds better. But it's still not enough.

We need something that'll bring in a lot.

Rita

One time I saw they had a baby picture contest. Maybe we could have a pet picture contest.

Peter

How will that make us money?

Rita

We could charge \$10 to enter your pet's picture.

Abby

And the prize would be to have the winner's picture outside the shelter.

Alex

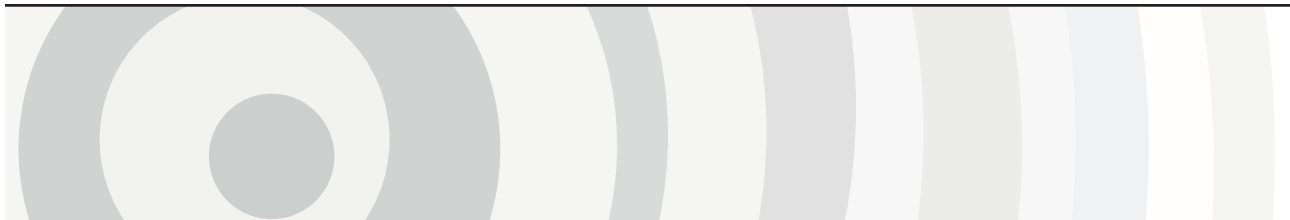
That's a great idea. Let's do it!

Rita

This will be fun!

Host

So all the kids made posters to advertise the "Pet Picture Contest." Then our newspaper did a story about it. We even advertised the contest.



When the local TV station heard about it, they did a story too.

And guess what? The kids received 255 entries and made \$2,550 for the animal shelter.

As a matter of fact, they got so much publicity, other people in town volunteered their time at the shelter and local businesses pledged money to help the shelter every month.

And what did it take to make all this happen? Resolution and perseverance—the courage to set a goal, stick with it and keep a positive attitude when others say it can't be done. That kind of courage paid off for Alex and his friends and all the animals they helped to save.

Question for Discussion

- Have you ever been in a situation where resolution and perseverance helped you achieve a goal? What was it? What did you do?

• • • •

Host

Now for my last story. It's about fortitude. That means having strength of mind and moral determination. The courage to stand up for what you believe in.

My search for a story about fortitude brought me back to our community center—and to Kyra. Kyra is on our town's swim team. On the first day of practice, the team saw a new girl waiting to sign up.

Stacey

I wonder who she is?

Greg

She's definitely new.



Laura

Doesn't look like a swimmer to me.

James

That's for sure.

Host

When the coach arrived, the kids found out more about the new girl.

Coach

Are you the new member of our team?

Melanie

Y-y-yes.

Coach

And what's your name?

Melanie

M-m-m-melanie.

Host

What they discovered about Melanie was that she stuttered.

A lot of the kids thought it was funny. When Kyra saw them giggling, she felt kind of bad inside.

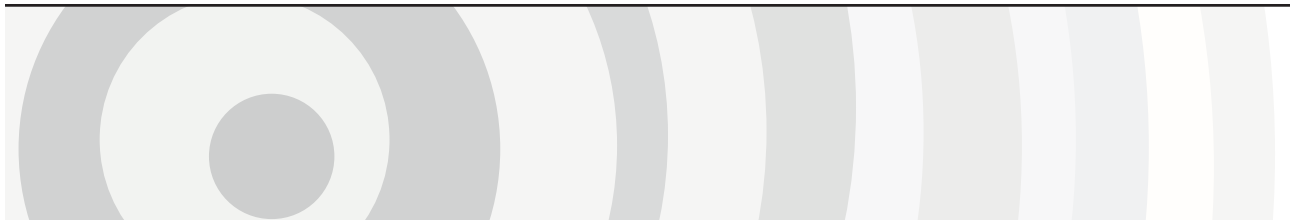
After practice, Kyra, thought it would be nice to ask Melanie if she wanted to hang out with the other kids. Melanie was very happy...but it didn't last long.

Kyra

Hey, guys. Melanie would like to hang out with us.

Stacey

Oh, t-t-that w-w-would be f-f-fun.



Kyra

Stacey!

Melanie

That's o-k-k-k-kay. I d-d-don-t want to p-p-play.

Host

Kyra could not believe her friends were being so mean. And now she felt torn. Should she say something to them?

Kyra had to make a difficult choice. But deep down inside she knew what the right choice was.

James

B-b-b-ye.

Kyra

That is horrible!

Stacey

It's funny.

Laura

She's such a loser.

Kyra

You shouldn't make fun of people.

Stacey

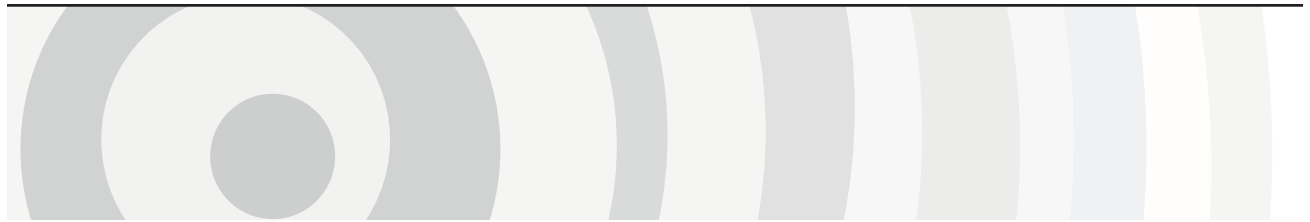
What are you, her friend or something?

Kyra

What difference does that make?

Stacey

Ooohh! Why don't you go p-p-p-play with her.

**Kyra**

Good idea.

Host

That took fortitude. The courage to stand up for what you believe is right. Even if it means standing up alone.

Question for Discussion

- Have you ever been in a situation that required you to show courage like Kyra? What was it? What did you do?

Host

Working on this assignment, I learned a lot about courage. I learned that courage isn't something you're born with. More, it's a decision you make. Courage is a choice.

The End

Teacher's Notes