

Courage

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY EDUCATOR BULLETIN

MARCH 2011

Vs. Fearfulness

I WILL:

- not be afraid to speak the truth
- keep a clear conscience
- support others when they are right
- be willing to stand alone
- speak with humility

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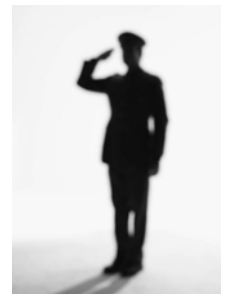
Facing fear and loss in pursuit of what is best

Courage is perhaps the most important character quality as it provides a foundation for the others. It takes courage to do the right thing. It is essential to the learning process. We need to let go of our comfort zones and reach out to experience new things whether it is long division or playing the

guitar. Courage allows us to take those first faltering steps.

Alfred Hitchcock admitted, "I turn my fears into movies." Like movies, we replay our fears over and over in our minds. Fear robs us of our happiness. Our fears can paralyze our

potential and jeopardize our success. With courage, we can take the risks and be confident that the ultimate outcome will be for our best since our conscience is clear. This month, what can you do to be more courageous?



Temor vs. Valentia

"Enfrentando el miedo y derrota para alcanzar lo mejor".



↻ ↻ Go to the Root ↻ ↻

c.1300, from Old French *corage* "heart, innermost feelings; temper"

(for more visit www.etymonline.com)

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“ People will accept your idea much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first.” -David H. Comins

Character Quotables

"Let's have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it."

~Abraham Lincoln

"A bold man is better in all things."

~Homer's Odyssey

"Freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have the courage to defend it."

~Pericles

"The greatest test of courage is to bear defeat without losing heart."

~Robert G. Ingersoll

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear ~ not the absence of fear."

~Mark Twain

"In difficult and hopeless situations, the boldest plans are safest."

~Titus Livy

"Courage is being scared to death...and saddling up anyway."

~John Wayne

"To bear failure with courage is the best proof of character that anyone can give."

~W. Somerset Maugham

"Courage conquers all things."

~Ovid

"Courage is fear holding on a minute longer."

~George S. Patton

"There is nothing with which every man is so afraid as getting to know how enormously much he is capable of doing and becoming."

~Soren Kierkegaard

"An essential aspect of creativity is not being afraid to fail."

~Edwin Land

"Deliberate with caution, but act with decision. Yield with graciousness, or oppose with firmness."

~Charles Caleb Colton

"We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light."

~Plato

"The great virtue in life is real courage that knows how to face facts and live beyond them."

~D. H. Lawrence

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."

~Anaïs Nin

"The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out and meet it."

~Pericles

Curriculum Connection Language Arts

Profiles in Courage is a 1955 Pulitzer Prize-winning biography describing acts of bravery and integrity by eight United States Senators throughout the Senate's history. The book profiles senators who crossed party lines and/or defied the public opinion of their constituents to do what they felt was right and suffered severe criticism and losses in popularity because of their actions. A teaching guide for this book may be found at :

www.ingramlibrary.com/Teacher%20Guides/Harper_ProfilesinCourageTG.pdf

For younger students, find age appropriate biographies of the individuals in the book and others like them.

Pee Wee Reese, Hero of Courage

There is a statue of Pee Wee Reese with Jackie Robinson outside of a Brooklyn ball field, KeySpan Park, where the Mets' Class A Cyclones play. It commemorates a courageous moment in both men's lives. Robinson was breaking the long-held racial barrier in the major leagues and Reese was the team captain.

The details are hazy and no photograph captured the gesture. Robinson had been receiving death threats and heckling and taunts from the crowd before a game (thought to

be at Cincinnati's Crosley Field). Reese, who earlier had refused to sign a petition about refusing to play if Robinson did, walked over to his teammate and made a gesture of friendship. It is unclear whether he put his arm around him or simply touched his arm. Whatever he did it told the crowd that Robinson had his support. The crowd quieted. The message was clear and much remembered.

It took courage to listen to his heart and do the right thing. His courage allowed him to face down the crowd

and support his teammate.



For more information visit
www.nytimes.com/2005/11/02/sports/baseball/02robinson.html

Team~Building Activity

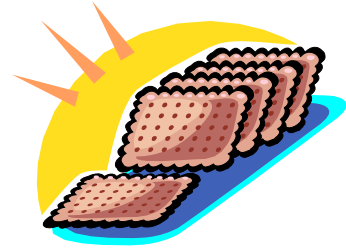
Building a culture of good character requires building the class into a community. Here is this month's teambuilding activity:



Shamrock Shuffle Arrange the students in chairs in a circle with one less chair than students. Larger classes may need multiple circles. Have the student without a chair stand in the middle. They are to call out a sentence that describes him or herself. Examples: Students wearing a red sweatshirt. Students with blonde hair. Students that play an instrument. Any student that also fits that description must stand up and switch chairs with other students who fit that description. The student standing in the middle must also try to sit in a vacant chair. There will be one student left. They now call out a sentence that is self-descriptive but that also would apply to other students so that a chair becomes vacant for them. At any point, you can call out "Shamrock Shuffle" and everyone must change places. Let them continue to rotate through the middle for as long as time allows. When they have finished playing ask them if they learned anything new about any of their classmates? Were they surprised to find out how many students were like themselves?

Note: The 'everyone move' command can be named anything appropriate to the season or the environment.

Crush Your Fears!



You will need plastic bags, crackers and markers or paint for this activity. Distribute the crackers (matza crackers work well). Instruct the students to write or paint a symbol of something where fear holds them back from doing the right thing. You can use a single large plastic bag like a freezer bag that you can write on or each student can have their own bag. Have the students make suggestions of things that can help you conquer fears i.e think positively; picture success; do something small towards your goal; practice in private; find someone who agrees with you; don't hang around the people who feed your fear, etc. They can write these on their bags or you can write them on the single bag. After you have discussed these strategies place the crackers with the fears on them inside of the bag and seal it. Now the students can crush the crackers representing their fears. Each student can crush their own or you can pass around the bag for all them to crush. An alternate activity would be to take the crackers outside and let the students crush them with their hands or stamp them with their feet. (If you do it outside, be sure to clean up the mess so birds won't eat the markers or paint.) Ask the students if they feel more courageous now that they have named a fear and crushed it.



Sign Language

Check out the following website for the American Sign Language interpretation of the word Courage and Fear for visual ways to describe courage and fear:

www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi

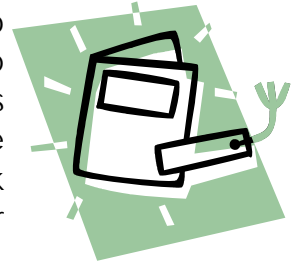
The Courageous Egg

For this demonstration you will need a wide mouth clear jar, uncooked rice and an egg. Place the egg at the bottom of the jar and fill the jar with rice. Tell some age-appropriate stories about students being courageous such as sticking up for someone who is being bullied, not helping someone else cheat, not repeat a rumor, admitting something wrong that they did etc. Each time you tell a story, try to use the word courage as often as you can. Each time you mention courage or doing the right thing, tap on the rim of the jar. The egg will begin to rise to the top of jar each time you tap on the jar. Tell enough stories until the egg has risen all the way to the top. Moral of the story: A courageous person will rise to the top and stand out from the rest!



Backbone

Show the class a piece of paper and a paper back book. Stand the paper on it's edge and challenge the class to make the paper hold up the book. See if they can come up with a way to make this happen. The trick is to tightly roll the paper into a tube about an inch or so in diameter. Now the paper will have no problem holding up the book. Sometimes we don't think we have what it takes to be courageous and do the right thing. But just like the paper, we can turn our weaknesses into strengths if we work on it and create the backbone needed to hold up under pressure.



Kamali'i Elementary School was selected as one of seven schools in the state of Hawaii to be part of a pilot project to infuse character education in the school curriculum under the Improving America's School Act. As part of their curriculum and their focus on teaching with Technology, they decided to have each class create a project every year to be published on the school web site.

Visit the work of their third grade class on Courage:

www.kamalii.k12.hi.us/Character3/courage_main.htm

The Courage of St. Patrick



This month we celebrate St. Patrick's Day but did you know that St. Patrick was known for his courage? In 433 AD, on the night before Easter and the start of the Druidic festival of Bealtine and the beginning of the Spring Equinox, St. Patrick came to the Hill of Slane to light a fire to celebrate Easter. High King Leoghaire (pronounced "Leary") mac Neill had issued a decree that no fires were to be lit until the lighting of the blaze atop nearby Tara Hill that would usher in the Spring Equinox. The king became angry at first, when he found out that his was not the first flame but then instead of executing him, King Leoghaire was so impressed by St. Patrick's courage that he allowed him to continue with his missionary work throughout Ireland. This story became the basis for the hymn, "Be Thou My Vision".

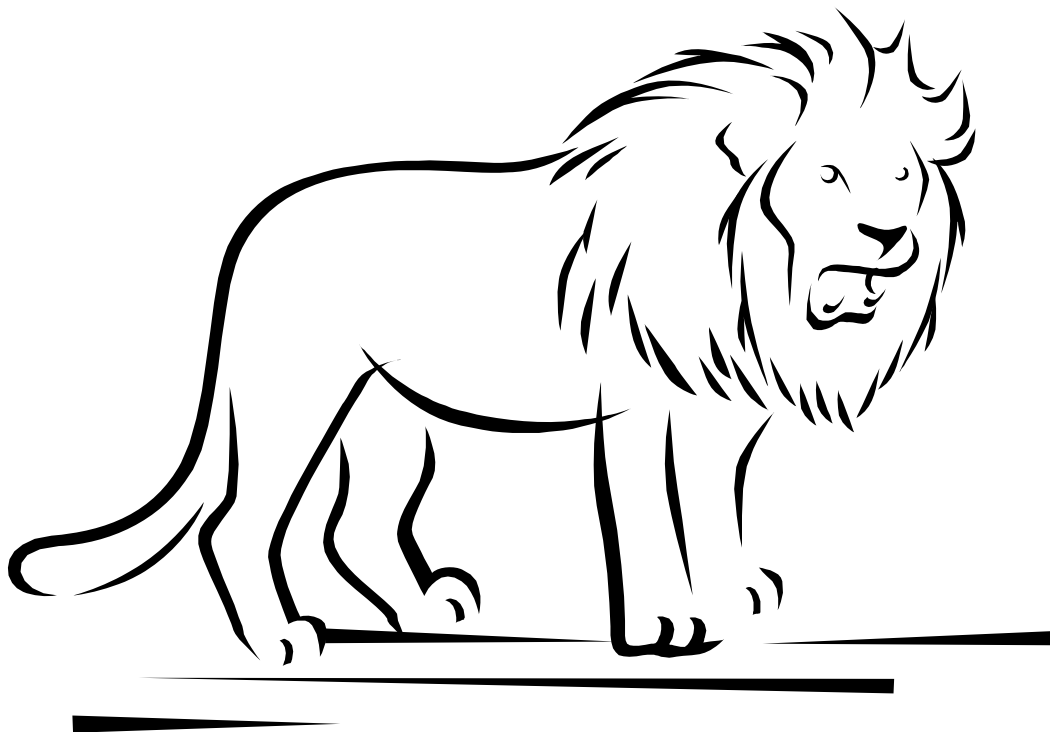
For more on this visit www.suite101.com/content/be-thou-my-vision-a249138

The Cowardly Lion

“It’s sad believe me, missy,
When you’re born to be a sissy
Without the vim and verve....”

The Cowardly Lion from “The Wizard of Oz” sang these words when he met Dorothy in the forest. In the end, we find that the Lion had courage all along, he just didn’t recognize it. Perhaps, being a “sissy” takes courage, if it means not following the crowd if they are doing something wrong.

For this activity, make copies of the Lion below. Make it large enough to write in the Lion’s body if your students are older or large enough to draw in if your students are younger. Instruct the students to record a time when they felt courageous. When they have finished ask if any want to share their experience. Ask the students to think back on what motivated them to be courageous. Perhaps they can make that work again for them in the future.



Courage or Foolishness

Sometimes, a foolhardy stunt is mistaken for bravery or courage. In order to show the difference between these two, have the students select articles from the newspaper or internet that demonstrate bravery and foolishness. Make a bulletin board that can show both sides.



What If...

What if the Boston Tea Party never happened or Rosa Parks gave up her seat on the bus? What if the courageous people whose actions shaped this nation had given into their fears? Make a list of historical people who were courageous (some are listed below). For older classes they may be able to help in constructing the list. Let each student do research about a person and tell what things could be like now if that person hadn't been courageous. An alternate lesson would be to lead a discussion on what would be different.

Rosa Parks
 Harriet Tubman
 Daniel Boone
 Paul Revere
 The Tuskegee Airmen
 George Washington
 The Wright Brothers
 Clara Barton
 Nathan Hale
 Lewis and Clark
 Christopher Columbus
 Martin Luther King, Jr
 Susan B. Anthony



Robin's Reading List

Preschool - 3

Courage by Bernard Waber

This book introduces children to the many ways to define this character trait. It's a great read-aloud to generate conversation about what courage is and isn't, and the many forms it takes. The focus is on a variety of scenarios from the lighthearted ("Courage is tasting the vegetable before making a face") to the more serious ("Courage is being the first to make up after an argument"). There are one or two statements on each page, accompanied by a cute pen-and-ink/watercolor illustration that offers a humorous interpretation of the text.

Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage to Be Who You Are by Maria Dismondy

This sweet story empowers children to always do the right thing, and be proud of them. Lucy is one of a kind, and Ralph loves to point that out! Lucy's defining moment comes when Ralph truly needs help. Because she knows what she stands for, Lucy has the courage to make a good choice, even when faced with someone as challenging as Ralph.

Franklin's New Friend by Paulette Bourgeois

Franklin has grown up in the same house, in the same town, with the same friends. Now, the Moose family moves into the neighborhood. One day at school, Mr. Owl asks Franklin to befriend Moose. At first, Franklin is afraid of Moose because of his large size. However, it isn't long before Franklin realizes that despite their differences, he has made a new friend.

Doctor DeSoto by William Steig

Doctor DeSoto runs a successful dental practice with his wife, Mrs. DeSoto. He is a very well-respected mouse-dentist. The DeSotos are professional and friendly toward all of their patients, except "cats and other dangerous animals," as clearly stated on the sign outside the office. Being the tender-hearted rodents that they

a look at a miserable fox that showed up begging for treatment. The fox, with "a rotten bicuspid and unusually bad breath," manages to behave himself while Doctor DeSoto is standing inside of his gaping jaws. However, when the wily fox returns the next day to get his replacement gold tooth, he has mouse-flavored snacks on his mind. Luckily, the dentist and his very able assistant anticipated such intentions, and find a way to outfox the ungrateful fox!

The Courage of Sarah Noble by Alice Dalgleish

When Sarah was 8 years old she had her great adventure...going with her father into the wilds of Connecticut to cook and take care of him, while he built a house for the family. She was worried about whether the Indians would be friendly. Many times Sarah had to say to herself something her mother told her when she left home..."keep up your courage, Sarah Noble, keep up your courage." This is a charmingly true story of faith, courage and friendship.

Grades 2 – 5:

Of Thee I Sing by Barack Obama

Written before he took office, this tender, beautiful letter directly addresses his daughters, Sasha and Malia, who appear throughout. This book is a moving tribute to 13 men and women...and corresponding qualities of character...that demonstrate the nation's best. Georgia O'Keefe (creativity), Cesar Chavez (inspiration), Billie Holiday (a gifted singer), Jackie Robinson (courage), Helen Keller (strength) are all American icons and heroes as exemplars of personal virtues. Obama cites why each figure merits admiration—Martin Luther King Jr., "taught us unyielding compassion," and Helen Keller, "never waiting for life to get easier," "gave others courage to face their challenges." President Obama sees the traits of these heroes within his own children, and within all America's children. Breathtaking illustrations by award-winning artist Loren Long capture the personalities and achievements of these great Americans, and the innocence and promise of childhood.

This beautiful book is about the potential within each of us to pursue our dreams, and make our own paths. It celebrates the characteristics that unite all Americans. It is a treasure to cherish with your family forever.

Grades 3 – 6:

The Incredible Journey by Sheila Burnford

A Labrador Retriever, Bull Terrier and Siamese Cat are all left stranded, through a series of mishaps, in a cabin over two hundred miles from home. These three characters decide to assume the responsibility of saving themselves by heading home by instinct and on foot. A fantastic series of challenges and accomplishments follow them. Along the way they face wild predators, starvation, the elements, and unbelievable distance. On this journey they learn lessons of love, loyalty and perseverance.

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George

Every kid thinks about running away at some point; few get very far. Sam Gibley, however, makes it all the way to the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York. With his wits as his survival tool, he sets up house in a huge hollowed-out tree with a weasel and a falcon for companions. Sam grows up a little, and learns to live off the land. He endures blizzards; hunters, loneliness and fear, which all make him want to return to city life. But his desire for freedom, adventure and independence is much stronger!

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

One of the great untold stories of World War II is the evacuation of Jews from Nazi-held Denmark. On September 19, 1943, word got out in Denmark that Jews were to be detained and then sent to the death camps. Quickly, the Danish police, resistance, and population arrange a small unit to herd 7,000 Jews to Sweden. This true-story account is brought to life through this fictional, courageous tale by Lois. She recounts this experience through the eyes of 10-year-old Annemarie Johanssen, whose family harbors her best friend, Ellen Rosen, on the eve of the round-up, and helps smuggle Ellen's family out of the

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Robin's Reading List

country.

Call It Courage by Armstrong Sperry
When Mafatu was 3 years old, he clung to his mother's neck as she braved raging sea waters and carried him to shore. She died immediately afterwards. Ever since, Mafatu has feared the sea. His father is the Great Chief of Hikuero, an island whose people worship courage. His friends and family scorn him, even blaming him for storms on the sea. He feels like he doesn't belong here. At age 15, Mafatu, in a desperate attempt to overcome his fears, he and his dog companion, Uri, hop into a canoe and set sail for the southern island. What he learns on his lonely adventure changes him forever, his courage remembered for generations to come, and he's viewed as a hero in the eyes of his people.

Secret of the Peaceful Warrior: A Story of Courage and Love by Dan Millman

This is an inspirational story about love and courage. When Danny's family moves to a new neighborhood, he is confronted by a frightening bully. One night in a dream, Danny meets an old man with shining white hair—a man who will soon appear in real life and share a wonderful secret.

Grades 6 – 8:

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

Brian Robeson, 13, is the only passenger in a two-person plane flying to visit his father in the Canadian wilderness, when the pilot has a heart attack and dies. He crash lands the plane into a small lake, and is able to swim free of the plane, arriving on the tree-lined shore with only his clothing and a hatchet his mother had given him as a gift. It seems as though Brian faces a life-and-death decision nearly every moment. This novel chronicles Brian's mistakes, setbacks and small successes in detail. With the help of his hatchet, he manages to survive 54 days alone in the wilderness. This truly is a heart-stopping story of survival.

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle by Avi

Charlotte Doyle, 13, lives in England

and goes to the Barrington School for Better Girls. Her family lives in Rhode Island. Charlotte is boarding the Seahawk (a two masted ship) with two other families, known by her father, to go on a voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to live with her family. Her father instructed her to keep a daily journal of her voyage. This journal ends up putting her life in jeopardy! Will Charlotte be charged with murder?

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

It is an inspirational story of the hardships of World War II and The Holocaust. Anne shares her thoughts, feelings, and insights about many issues. Her entries show her growing, maturing from a girl to a young woman, experiencing new emotions such as love and courage. Throughout the diary, Anne shows much courage by acting mature beyond her years never complaining about the situation she is in. Her values and morals change as she leaves her normal school life to go into seclusion from the outside world. She finds that she loves and trusts the son of the family living with them; a loss of innocence. Anne died 3 months before her 16th birthday in a concentration camp in 1945. In the end, Anne's diary comes to an end, but her hopes and dreams live on forever.

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

The Newberry Medal-winning story is of Karana, a 12-year old Indian girl, who lives alone on a Pacific island after she leaps from a rescue ship. Isolated on the Island of the Blue Dolphins for eighteen years, Karana forages for food, builds weapons to fight predators, clothes herself in a feathered skirt, and finds strength and peace in her seclusion. This is a classic tale of personal discovery, courage, strength and solitude.

Grades 9 – 12:

The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane

This story centers on Henry Fleming, a protagonist, who matures from an inexperienced soldier, to a more quiet

man. In the beginning Fleming believes war to be glorious and honorable...the perfect test for courage, so he enlists in the Union army. After he flees from his first battle, he realizes his cowardice, and that a soldier's actual purpose is defending his beliefs and his country. Killing is not where the courage is, but being willing to die for the protection of others is the true courage. Fleming arrives back at his camp with a gash in his head he accidentally received from another Union soldier. As the other soldiers care for him, his wound mistaken for a battle scar, he ironically earns a reputation. Fleming later leads his regiment in battles as he matures into an experienced veteran, understanding that war is not all glory.

The Cage by Ruth Minsky Sender

Brief scenes from 1939 are reflected in the Holocaust memoir, when the author was 12 and Hitler invaded Poland. There are harrowing descriptions of life and death in the ghetto and concentration camps. Sender gives testimonials to the love, strength, and dignity that helped make Riva's survival possible. Early on in the book, Riva's widowed mother is arrested, and the concerns center on the then 16-year-old's courageous efforts to preserve a family with her younger brothers. Later, after an Auschwitz ordeal, Riva is taken to a slave labor camp where she becomes very ill. Through courage she does live – to write the unforgettable memoir that is a testament to the strength of the human spirit.

The Color of Courage by Janet Teppele

This powerful novel, written by a sixteen-year-old young woman is set in Northwest Canada. The Color of Courage is about the life and daily travails of a blind girl, Lindsey, who learns to better understand the world around her. Only faith sustained Lindsey after the loss of her beloved twin brother. Now a freak accident would test the U.S. Army corporal's mettle again. The loss of vision is balanced by the growth of wisdom and inner strength in this touching and heartfelt story.

Croskey's Corner

Courage works at my school. So does Cowardice, but that person is not who I want to write about. Courage is a great teacher, who tries new ideas when the old ones don't seem to be working. Courage is afraid of change; but Courage knows that change is part of life. So, while Courage may not embrace change, Courage bravely takes it on as something to try to make the best of.

The other day, Courage had parent-teacher conferences. One parent was angry and aggressive because Courage had been working to teach the parent's son to be more responsible in completing his school work. The parent began the conference with accusations about Courage being too lenient and not having high standards. Courage did not give in or give up. Courage just kept listening and then helped the parent to see the half-truths the child was telling and the way he was misrepresenting what Courage was saying and doing in class. The parent left the conference with a new respect for Courage.

Courage has only been teaching at my school for a short time. The other day, the district leadership announced a Reduction in Force. This RIF means that a number of teachers will be laid off. Unfortunately, Courage is one with low seniority. But you have got to give Courage credit. Instead of taking the lazy way out and putting little effort into a job that will disappear in June, Courage continues to write exemplary lesson plans and to teach each day with passion and energy.

Courage is a mother of a one year-old. The child never sleeps through the night. Consequently, Courage only gets about 4 hours of sleep per night, on a GOOD night. But does that stop Courage? Nope. That teacher is at school every day, on time, and ready to inspire the students. That is Courage!

Courage has a student who is part of a family that has experienced generational poverty. This student has a coat, but it is dirty and torn. Courage knows that the coats that were available after the December Coat Drive are all gone. Courage did not know where to turn. But instead of quitting, Courage went shopping and got this student a great new coat! The student really liked it! That's Courage!

Our district has an operating levy which will be on the May ballot. Teachers have been asked to volunteer to help with the Levy Campaign. Courage is already too busy with the regular responsibilities of the job. But Courage knows that there is no better model of what is good about our District than a dedicated teacher. So, Courage volunteered to pass out education materials which can help to inform the voters. Courage also made a personal donation of \$25 to the Levy Campaign Treasury. Courage is determined to do everything possible to win this election. Thank you, Courage.

Courage has been diagnosed with diabetes. It is controllable, but it is also scary and full of foreboding. What to expect? How bad with the discomfort be? What will I eat? All these questions are going through Courage's mind. It is tempting to stay home and to "hide" from the disease. But Courage has not followed that path. Courage comes every day, despite the uncertainty and medical difficulties. Courage fights through!

Courage is afraid every day, but still shows up. Courage wants to quit, but doesn't. Courage wants a break and wants to be impatient. But Courage has self-discipline enough to be patient when that doesn't seem worth doing. Courage also has enough Faith to know that acting "as if" something were true, when every indication is that it is NOT, can, nevertheless, MAKE it come true through sheer will and belief. Courage continues, then, because of Hope, but also out of Love. Courage has devoted students because they see the power Courage has to make the impossible happen.

Bill Croskey is a school
psychologist from the
Loveland
City Schools

Say, you look familiar. Aren't YOU Courage? You work here, too, don't you?

With appreciation, to Tom Romano, at Miami University, and J. Ruth Gendler.



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Character...It Starts With Me!

Character in the Classroom *Continuously*

There are many ways that you can teach the Character Quality of Month. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Ask students to make posters to hang in the classroom or around the school.
- Challenge students to find quotes, news stories, current (or classic) songs or movies that portray the character quality of the month. Be sure to share these with the class and “archive” these to use in future years.
- Add the character trait of the month to the spelling word list. (Even if it is posted in the classroom to copy!)
- Offer for students to make a video or write a rap that demonstrates the Character Quality of the Month.
- If you teach younger students, see if you can “borrow” some older students to lead your students in an activity or switch the roles and have the younger students “teach” a rhyme to the older students.
- If you teach older students, you can be the initiator in the previous activities.
- Invite local business leaders or small business owners to talk about the importance of a character trait. If you teach older students, aim to get a representative from a business that typically hires teens so that they can relate the importance of good character when applying for and *keeping* a job.
- Men and women in uniform usually make impressive guest speakers. Police departments, fire departments and military recruiting offices are usually willing to come into a classroom. Do not be afraid to give them specific requests or guidelines for speaking so that it is pertinent to the lessons of the month.
- Always have a generic character activity planned and ready to go that you can use as filler when you have time to kill or that a substitute teacher can use in your absence.