



Eighth Grade | COURAGE | Lesson 1

LESSON 1:

Discovering Courage

Student Outcomes	CSED/ SEL Model Standards
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Define courage.➤ Generate examples for small and large acts of courage.➤ Create a word association for the term courage.➤ Cite the benefits of practicing courage mentally, physically and emotionally.	<p><u>CSED</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Performance Character➤ Intellectual Character <p><u>SEL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Self Awareness➤ Self Management➤ Relationship Skills➤ Responsible Decision Making

Educator Prep

- Preview the word association activity and prepare to share your own example with the group during the lesson.
- You may choose to digitize your word association using the site:
<https://wordart.com/create>
- Write 'Benefits of Courage' on the board. Make three columns with these words:
Mental, Physical, Emotional

Lesson

“Now that we’re ready to get out of our comfort zones and grow, we will start our first unit at the beginning of the Choose Love Formula: courage. We’re going to focus over the next few weeks on what courage is, how it benefits us, skills to build our courage muscles, and how to practice courage in our lives.”

“What are some other words you think of when you think of courage?” Responses may include: brave, superhero, fearless, help, support, protect, guide, strong, etc.

“Courage is defined as the willingness and ability to work through obstacles despite feelings of embarrassment, fear, reluctance or uncertainty. When you make positive choices, even though they may be difficult for you, you are practicing courage.”

“What are examples of everyday acts of courage?” Encourage students to identify acts of courage in their personal lives, school or community. This can be things they’ve experienced or witnessed or even things they’ve done themselves. For example: Scoring in the last minutes of a game, asking a teacher for help, standing up to a bully, welcoming a new student, taking a test, trying out for a team or play, standing up for someone being teased, performing in front of an audience, learning something new, solving conflicts peacefully, making a new friend, sharing your opinion/honest feelings about something, etc.

“We are going to do an activity called, ‘Word Up’. We are going to start by writing the word ‘Courage’ in your journal. When I say go, I want you to think of the first word that comes to your mind and write it underneath Courage. Then, think of the next word that comes to mind from the 2nd word and write that underneath your second word. We will continue on like this for 8 words. After we’ve written 8 words, we’ll go back and add words before and after the word you wrote down...in this way, you are adding content and depth, shaping your poem.”

“Let’s take a few minutes to do this. Start with the word, ‘Courage’ and flow from there, word after word after word.....quickly writing the first word that comes to mind after each word. Be spontaneous and creative - express your thoughts and feelings freely, let your mind make its own connections. Then, use your words as the base for your poem...fill in the blanks, expand upon these starting words.” Allow students to create their poems.

“Let me show you mine.” Write the following words on the board using arrows to connect the words from top to bottom to show how one word stemmed from the preceding word:

Courage

Hope

Belief

Faith

Strength

Confidence

Me

Happiness

"I added words before and after these words to fill out my poem."

COURAGE

I have HOPE for today,

BELIEF in all that is good.

My FAITH will stand firm.

I find STRENGTH through my struggles.

My CONFIDENCE shines brightly,

The light is ME.

HAPPINESS is my choice.

Students may choose to share their poems after you share yours.

"Did you know that people who overcome their fears and show courage are happier and healthier?"

"Courage has many benefits. When we know the benefits of something, we are more likely to do it. When we know that there are physical, mental, and emotional benefits of being courageous, we'll be more likely to practice courage on a daily basis. It also feels good to act courageously. How do you feel after having acted courageously? How has acting courageously benefited you in your life? When you practiced courage, what mental, emotional and physical benefits did you experience? What have you achieved as a result of

having courage? Let's brainstorm a list for each category." Write Physical, Mental, and Emotional as the headings for 3 columns. Allow for sharing of varied responses.

Mental responses should include: believing in themselves more, increased confidence, learning something new, knowing they can achieve something, increased focus and concentration, helps them become a leader, empowers you to make good choices, helps you accomplish things, helps you avoid unnecessary risks.

Emotional responses should include: helps us control and master our emotions, helps us overcome fear, decreased stress and worry, increased pride and happiness, feeling - brave, confident, strong, proud, happy, relieved, excited, powerful, and bold.

Physical responses should include: better sleep, fewer headaches, less tension, feel calmer, a rush of energy or strength, less physical harm to self as you avoid risky behaviors, lower levels of cortisol which causes stress, slows down heart rate.

"Today we've gotten a better idea of what courage is. Sometimes we're called on to demonstrate great acts of courage, while other times we are asked to show small acts or everyday acts of courage. Courage sometimes looks like great physical strength, but it can also sound like gentle, kind words."

Call to Action

Make an infographic (a drawing with information, like a cartoon) with the benefits of courage and share it with someone you know. [Canva](https://www.canva.com/) offers a free online graphic design platform and has a variety of Infographic templates the students could customize.



EXTENSION OPPORTUNITY:

I Choose Love

Display the following poem for the class. Read it aloud.

I CHOOSE LOVE

By Maithri Goonetilleke

(Goonetilleke, 2008)

So many roads, so many choices, and it seems like I've chosen them all in this short life.

Sometimes, many times, I've chosen pain - sometimes immediate, sometimes remembered, always real.

I chose to let it sting me like the barbs of a nettle or an old wire fence.

I chose to bleed. I chose to let the CD player of my mind run on one track all day - trying to hurt away the hurt.

Many times I chose fear, chose to shrink away from the world cloaked only in thoughts of disapproval, of not being good enough.

But today, I have no time for pain. I have no time for fear. Don't get me wrong. It's not because there are not things to hurt about or people who will disapprove. But because I know now, that there is ALWAYS another road. A road which I would much rather walk.

So today I choose peace. I choose to not judge the world, the people in it or the things that happen to me as good or bad. But simply to know that on a far deeper level than I can ever be aware - I am safe. I am held. I am worthy.

I choose to honour my body. Not only with good food, mindful eating, and exercise. But also to remember that we are sensual beings. I will comfort my eyes by finding something beautiful in each thing I see. I will caress the world with my hands, make love to it with my words, embrace it with my mind.

And throughout this day, I will continue to make life affirming choices.

I choose to dance, to let joy take me over completely and not worry for one moment about the ones who might see or judge.

I choose to breathe. I choose to breathe life in and to let it breathe me in.

I choose to laugh. Loud and long. At the world but mostly at myself for all the times I've taken life oh so seriously.

And most of all - I choose love. I choose to love myself. I choose to let friends and strangers become my love.

And when I walk into the world and see discord, I will look harder. I will look for beauty.

I will look for peace. And I will find it. And when I meet hatred, I will open my heart so wide and let the sea of my love wash over it - till it melts away.

And when I see a man, woman or child in pain (whomever they be) - I will use my life's energy to bring what healing I can. And if I cannot heal their pain, I will kneel down and wash their feet.

Today is a new day.

And I Choose Love.

“What does this mean to you? Are there any parts that really stand out for you? Why? Are there any parts that you can really relate to? In what ways? How does this poem make you feel? Take a minute to write down your thoughts and responses to these questions.”

Allow students a few minutes to express their thoughts and reactions to this poem in their journals. Then, get back to the larger group and pose these questions having students volunteer their thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Remember that students may be reluctant to share their thoughts and feelings because it's exposing themselves and that can make them feel vulnerable, uncomfortable, or perhaps embarrassed if they are not used to expressing themselves in this way. Be encouraging - praise them for their courage.



EXTENSION OPPORTUNITY:

Choose Love Constitution

“Today we are going to draft our very own Choose Love Constitution. A constitution is a document that we create together as a group, which defines how we agree to treat each other. It’s a set of guidelines that we create to ensure that each person feels safe, cared for, and able to be their best self in this classroom.”

“Most of the time people create rules for us that we must follow, like rules for a game, what acceptable behavior is at school or work, or what is legal. However, for our Choose Love Constitution, you will create the rules and guidelines about how to treat one another.”

“Why do you think it’s important to create our own constitution? How do you think it would benefit our class to create and have a constitution?” Ask students if they are familiar with the ‘Golden Rule’, if not remind them of it. Ask them how it could benefit them.

“Think quietly for a moment about how you want to be treated, and how you want to treat others. Then, let’s list some ideas for what we want to include in our Choose Love Constitution.”

Write ideas on the board or on a visible piece of paper. Typical examples of classroom constitution rules include: treat each other with respect, the Golden Rule, listen to one another’s opinions, share feelings openly and honestly, ask permission before borrowing something, don’t laugh or make fun of others, help each other, speak kindly to each other, work through conflicts peacefully, etc.

“It can take courage to uphold our Choose Love Constitution. How could you help someone who is having a difficult time agreeing to or following our constitution?”

“We are going to continue expanding and refining our constitution over the course of the year. It will grow with us as we explore what it means to Choose Love. In your journals, write down one part of the constitution that will be harder for you to follow. This should be something you pay close attention to.”

“It takes courage to discuss these subjects and to practice choosing love in our daily lives. We all have this courage within us. I want to applaud you in advance for this courage.”

Everything we do in these lessons is designed to make us stronger and more resilient individuals. It will help us build greater awareness and compassion for ourselves, others, and the world around us. To end today's lesson, let's draw a picture to represent what LOVE looks like to us. What does LOVE mean to you? How do you see LOVE? What words and pictures describe LOVE through your lens?"