



Seventh Grade| COURAGE| Lesson 1

LESSON 1:

Discovering Courage

Small and large acts of courage can benefit us in many ways

Student Outcomes	CSED/ SEL Model Standards
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Define courage.➤ Compare and contrast everyday and heroic acts of courage.➤ Rate scenarios on a courage scale.➤ Cite the benefits of practicing courage.➤ Create a courage mural.	<p><u>CSED</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Moral Character➤ Performance Character➤ Intellectual Character <p><u>SEL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Self Awareness➤ Self Management➤ Responsible Decision Making

Educator Prep

- Have chart paper or butcher paper taped up or laid out in the room for the students to create a Choose Love mural. If this is not available, individual sheets of paper that can be put together to create a mural will work as well!
- Have markers or crayons available for students to use.
- See Additional Resources tab online for interactive platform suggestions for remote learning.

- **TEACHER TIP:** Prepare to use non-judgmental responses in this discussion. Correct off-topic responses, but otherwise respond non-judgmentally. Unlike some academic subjects, where there are clear right or wrong answers, social and emotional learning is more ambiguous and subjective. Say things like “thank you” or “that’s one idea, who has another to add” in order to acknowledge participation without making value judgments about responses. You can also ask follow up questions about student’s responses as a way to increase engagement without critiquing their ideas, feelings, or experiences. This teaching strategy helps bring psychological and emotional safety in the classroom and improves learning by fostering trust and connections and encouraging participation.
- **TEACHER TIP:** Talking about love, feelings, challenges and relationships in school is likely unusual for students. You may notice behaviors such as laughing, distraction, silliness, mockery of content, or generally acting out throughout the program. If you notice this happening rather than punishing students’ negative behaviors, simply acknowledge that it might be uncomfortable to discuss these topics. Let students know that they are encouraged to participate, but it is not mandatory. It’s their choice whether to share or not. Also let them know that you hope to create a classroom culture where everyone feels safe and comfortable learning, sharing and participating. By learning about and discussing these subjects, students will become more self-aware and confident. They will cultivate connections with each other. And this social and emotional learning will help out students to become more resilient and better able to handle whatever may come their way. **WE LOVE THIS!!**
- Create a physical cue for courage. Physical cues help students remember and embody the lessons about courage. Options include using American Sign Language (ASL), another hand symbol you create, clapping chants, brief rhymes, or a full body pose.



➤ Sign for “Brave”

- Prepare to document students’ classroom constitution on a piece of poster board or paper. It should be visible and accessible to students at all times.

Lesson

“Now that we’re ready to get out of our comfort zones, grow and take risks, we will start our first unit at the beginning of the Choose Love Formula: courage.” Use your physical cue for courage when you say the word now and throughout the lessons. “

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 daily lives. We’re going to have a lot of fun!”

“Some of these concepts we’ll cover, such as love, compassion, feelings, challenges, and relationships are not topics regularly discussed in school. How do you feel talking about these things?” Encourage students to use emotional language such as “scared”, “nervous”, “happy”, “excited” instead of judgmental language such as “weird”, “stupid”, or “strange”.

“What challenges do you face on a day-to-day basis? Or what do you expect to face in Middle School?” Allow students to share ideas or document them in their journals.

“Facing challenges takes courage. You use courage in your lives everyday! Courage is not always only used for life-threatening events...it is also used every day when you decide to get up and face the day!”

“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.”

“When we think of courage and courageous acts, we often think of the extreme, like saving someone from a burning building, but there are heroic acts of courage and everyday acts of courage that strengthen our courage muscles as well!”

“What are some examples of heroic acts of courage?” Encourage students to identify examples from the news, stories they have read, or from history.

“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.

“Listen to the following examples of courage. Put yourself in the person’s shoes and take their perspective. How much courage do you think you’d need to do what they did? Show me five fingers for a lot of courage, three fingers for some courage, and no fingers if you think they’d need very little courage.”

***You may choose to put numbers 1-4 or 1-5 around your classroom and have students move around the room to get up, as well as giving yourself a visual for where the majority of the class feels each act would belong on the ‘courage scale’.**

Use scenarios that are relevant to your class, or select from the examples below.

- Asking someone to be your boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Trying to score in the last minutes of a game.
- Asking a teacher for help.
- Telling an adult you trust that you’ve been harmed in some way.
- Standing up to a bully.
- Saying hello to a new student.
- Standing up to a social injustice.
- Taking a test.
- Standing up for someone who is being teased.
- Performing in front of an audience.
- Solving a conflict peacefully.
- Helping someone in need.
- Learning something new.
- Auditioning for a team or play.

“Small and large acts of courage are both important. One is not better than the other. Even the littlest acts of courage can make a huge difference. 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.”

“Courage has many benefits. It helps us build confidence, try and learn new things, and face and overcome obstacles. It can help us celebrate our differences, be creative, and say no to things that might be harmful to us. It also feels good to act courageously. How do you feel after having acted courageously?”

Answers may include: brave, strong, confident, happy, excited, relieved, bold, powerful, proud, etc.

"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.

Have students copy some of the benefits in their journals or you can type them up and hand them out to students at a later date. Time permitting, you could also continue this lesson having students research the benefits of courage online or in the library.

“As you can see there are so many benefits to having and showing courage. It seems silly not to try it out. Let’s decide today that we are going to have courage and start acting courageously.”

“To end today’s lesson, let’s create a courage mural in our classroom.....include words and pictures of what courage means to you right now!” This mural can be posted up in the classroom or out in the hallway to remind students that we use courage every day!

Call to Action

Share the definition of courage and examples of everyday acts of courage with your family and friends. Can you demonstrate everyday acts of courage between now and the next class? What would they be?



EXTENSION OPPORTUNITY: Courage Quotes

Educator Preparation

Have the quotes for this lesson posted on the board.

Lesson

“Last time, we created our Choose Love Constitution. Today we’ll talk more about specific ways we can show courage in the classroom. What are some ways you might need to show courage in the classroom or at school?” Write the list generated on the board and have students copy it in their Choose Love Journals. Be sure to include some or all of the following: overcoming nerves on the first day of school, introducing themselves to a new student, making a new friend, asking for help, taking a test, sharing their feelings, apologizing for mistakes, standing up for someone, not caving in to peer pressure, trying out for a team or play, standing up to a bully, giving your opinion even though it may not be the same as that of others, learning something new, continuing to try after making mistakes, not giving up, working on something challenging, being yourself, etc.

“It takes courage to be who you are, to make new friends and fit in, to stand out in a crowd, to navigate middle school and its challenges, and to follow our Choose Love Constitution. Courageous people stand up for what’s right even if they are afraid. They follow their hearts and work towards what they know is right and for what they want despite challenges. Did you know that people who overcome their fears and show courage are happier and healthier? Why do you think that is the case?”

“Courage has many benefits. Courage can help us build confidence, try and learn new things, and face and overcome obstacles. It can help us celebrate our differences, be creative, and say no to things that might be harmful to us. It also feels good to act courageously. How do you feel after having acted courageously?” Allow for a few responses.

“How has acting courageously benefited you in your life? What have you achieved as a result of having courage?” Allow for sharing of varied responses.

“Here are some quotes about courage that we are going to discuss:

“It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.”

— J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

— Winston S. Churchill

“Above all, be the heroine of your life, not the victim.”

— Nora Ephron

“The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

— Nelson Mandela

Discuss these quotes with the class.

“Now I want you to try to write your own courage quote. Think about the people you know who are courageous. Think about your own courage. Think about Jesse Lewis and the courage he showed. Now try to write your own courage quote in your journal. You can use the words courage, brave, hero...or any other courage related words you can think of in your quote. You can even write it as a definition; *Courage is...*”

Allow the students to write their courage quotes in their journals. Have them share the quotes with the class. You may even want to write these on chart paper and post them around the classroom to inspire the students to have courage.

Tell the students that they showed courage just sharing their quotes today! These quotes can help them remember to use courage to help them overcome their fear.



EXTENSION OPPORTUNITY: COURAGE IS...

Educator Prep:

You will write the following on the board :

- Courage is (sights, smells, sounds, textures, tastes)
- Courage is (emotions)
- Courage is (actions)
- Courage is (desires).

Lesson:

“We talked the other day about courageous role models. We discovered and highlighted some of the qualities they have in common. On any given day, you could find yourself uncertain about a difficult and important situation or decision. You may find yourself called on to show courage. When that happens, remind yourself of what courage looks like, sounds like, feels like. Remember the qualities and values that exemplify courage. You have these qualities in you. Have a courageous voice and listen to what it tells you and how it moves you. We are going to write “Courage is...” poems. Complete the statements written on the board in your journal. Let your words be your inspirations!”

Courage is (sights, smells, sounds, textures, tastes).

Courage is (emotions).

Courage is (actions).

Courage is (desires).

If students need prompting, read some of the examples below.

Courage is a hug, the taste of victory, the sound of applause.

Courage is belly fire, humility, a full heart, love.

Courage is standing up, standing still, risk.

Courage is striving, designing, inviting.

Courage is peaceful like the sound of the ocean waves and the feel of the gentle breeze through your hair, urging you on.

Courage is calm, confident, determined, excited.....a rush that lifts you past your fears.
Courage is believing, changing, growing, leading the way for yourself and others.
Courage is hopeful, making a difference and choosing love.

Ask for some volunteers to share their courage poems. You may also choose to have students write these up nicely and decorate for a classroom or school display.