



Standing firm in a personal value, despite opposition

EXPANDED DEFINITION

Standing firm in a personal value despite opposition or lack of support. Maintaining "wholeness of character," or authenticity despite external pressures to speak or act in a way contrary to personal beliefs. Courage often takes the form of initiative and leadership in uncertain situations.

Courage is typically understood by the image of a warrior standing strong during battle, but this is incomplete. Courage is best understood as a constellation of strengths and virtues that together create the capacity to take action despite uncertainty, danger, discomfort, or fear.

CHARACTER IN ACTION

1st Lt. Travis Manion, USMC (1980-2007)



In 1990, Travis and his friend Steve went to a local pizza shop to get a slice and a soda. Steve went up to the counter and asked for a slice of cheese and a coke, but the shop owner completely ignored him. Steve asked again and was again ignored. Steve is black, and was experiencing racism probably for the first time in his young life. Realizing what was happening, Travis stepped up and ordered two slices of pizza and two cokes and handed the food to his friend. Travis, then 9 years old, said "Sir, what you're doing is wrong and we will never be back." Travis honed his personal courage at a young age and acted with courage throughout his life. When under enemy fire in Iraq in 2007, Travis once more acted with courage, ultimately laying down his life to save others.

MENTORSHIP QUESTIONS

(10 minutes)

- + Who is an example of someone that has displayed courage (in your life or a news story)?
- + Why is it sometimes difficult to stand up for something that you believe in?
- + Tell me about a situation you found yourself in when you needed to use courage? Was it difficult? Rewarding?
- + "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear," - Nelson Mandela. What does this quote mean to you?



ACTIVITY: IMPROV

OBJECTIVES

- + Students will distinguish the difference between moral and physical courage
- + Students will demonstrate moral courage as they partake in improvisational comedy
- + Students will explain how they use courage in their own life

Time: 45-65 minutes

Materials:

- + Guest Improv actor (when applicable)



DIRECTIONS

Introduction of Courage

(5 minutes)

- + Ask students if they can explain the difference between moral and physical courage.
 - Physical Courage: Running into a burning building
 - Moral Courage: Standing up for something that you believe in
- + Share a personal story about how courage was used in the mentor's life or refer to the Character in Action story.

Improv Exercises

(20-40 minutes)

- + As directed by a guest Improv actor

Dr. Know It All

- + Break students into even groups and have the mentor ask each group a question (ex. What should I buy my sister for Christmas?)
- + The group has to come up with a complete sentence and only one member of the group can say one word at a time before the next member says the next word.
- + Have students answer three questions within their groups:
 - What sport should I play this year?
 - How did I get stuck in the woods?
 - Where are we going on this family vacation?
- + Bring the students back to the large group and have each group answer a different question (Mentor or student choice) while the other groups listen to the answers given.

Zip Zap Zop

- + Students and CDM Mentors will get into a circle and one person will start the game by pressing their hands together in a pointing gesture. The student will motion forward while making eye contact with another member in the group. The student will point at that person with their hands pressed together (prayer hands) and say "Zip" to the other member.
- + The student chosen will make the same hand movement and will choose another person in the circle to make eye contact while saying the word "Zap."
- + The student chosen will make the same hand moment and will choose another person in the circle to make eye contact while saying the word "Zop."
- + Continue this until everyone in the circle has had a turn. Encourage the students to go faster and to keep the same pattern of people. If a student didn't make eye contact with the person who is making the hand gesture, they must start over.

DEBRIEF AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

(10 minutes)

- + How did the improv activities require courage? What type of courage was used?
- + What is gained when you are using courage and it forces you to be uncomfortable and vulnerable?
- + How is courage used in standing up for something you believe in when people might not agree with you or joking is happening?



TRAVIS MANION
FOUNDATION

"If Not Me, Then Who..."

COURAGE

CALL TO ACTION

After Dinner Speeches

It's been said that people fear public speaking even more than death. At your next family gathering, host an "After-Dinner Speeches" party. Have everyone write down the title of a fictitious speech (such as "What Snowmen Eat," "How Playdough was Discovered," "My Most Successful Failure," "If Toddlers ruled America"), and put them in a hat.

Each speaker pulls out a topic and gives a two-minute speech with no hesitations or repetitions, then passes the hat to the next person. You don't need to know anything about your silly topic! The goal is to deliver the speech with so much authority and confidence that you WOW everyone with your amazing knowledge!

More resources available at travismanion.org.

TMF strengths content is based on the Values in Action classification developed by the VIA Institute on Character.