



COURAGE_

1STLT. TRAVIS MANION

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 African American 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. At the age of 9, Travis 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 acted with courage and ultimately laid down his life to save others.



"Courage is rightly esteemed as the first of human qualities... because it is the quality that guarantees all others"
- Winston Churchill



Moral Courage: 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. 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. Supporting character strengths include integrity, enthusiasm and perseverance.

COURAGE_

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Courage is often described as “the uncomfortable” strength, because it requires feeling fear or discomfort before taking necessary action. Because of this, it is best appreciated in retrospect.

Think back over the past few months:

- Can you identify a moment during which you felt fear or discomfort and took action anyway?
- In what way did you exercise courage? What were the consequences?

Discussion Prompt:

- One of your peers is a little different and he is the guy that the others usually pick on. You have compassion for this teammate and don't join the others.
- Is that enough or is it your obligation to speak up? What if by speaking up they start making fun of you?

In the future:

- How will you be intentionally courageous?
- What situations can you identify where courage may be called upon?
- What exact steps or actions will you take to exercise and develop your courage?

ACTIVITY

Improv - Sound Ball

Have the group stand in a circle. One person makes any sound while also making a throwing gesture towards another person in the group. That second person then 'receives' the sound with a physical motion like catching a ball and repeats the sound sent to them. Then, without hesitation, the first receiver sends a new sound with a new gesture to another person in the circle. Keep the sound moving quickly and boldly to get everyone involved.

Remind the students to make sure their entire body is involved, and encourage them not to predict or plan what sound they'll make. You can create your own variation, like City Ball, Vegetable Ball, or Animal Ball

The purpose of this activity is to take kids out of their comfort zone. Being silly in front of a group of peers takes courage - as does not picking on anyone when their friends do.

A great field trip variation would be to take the kids to an improv theatre or bring in a teacher familiar with improv comedy!



CALL TO ACTION

Becoming a courageous person starts with small acts. Travis Manion didn't just decide to be courageous all of a sudden while serving in the military - he practiced all throughout his life. At home and at school, challenge yourself to be courageous in the little things:

- Tell your friends you can't hang out because you want to spend time with your family or stay home to study.
- Don't laugh next time you see someone get picked on. Take it a step further and stick up for them.
- Know someone is cheating at school? Confront them and try to convince them to come clean.