Courage Lesson Plan

Discuss Respect. RESPECT is showing high regard for authority, for other people, for self, for property, and for country. RESPECT is understanding that all people have value as human beings. They deserve to be treated kindly and politely. RESPECT is treating others the way you want to be treated. You might ask the students for examples of ways they have been respectful or ways others have been respectful to them since the last character trait lesson.

Ask the students what they think Courage means. Courage is personal bravery in the face of fear. It is doing what needs to be done even when it is really hard or scary. Courage is trying new things, facing difficult situations, and trying again. It is doing what you know is right, even if other people laugh at you or call you names. Families and close friends give us courage and strength to keep trying. Courage helps us do great things even when we are scared or unsure.

Read the selected book. At this point read the book Courage and use the below points for discussion or you may wish to save the book for the end and go through the points below first. You may also want to discuss how the characters in the book did or did not demonstrate COURAGE as you read the book or after reading. Do what works for you.

Some Courage Tips:
1. Courage is a way of life. Although we don't notice it, courage is part of our routines (i.e., first day of school, going to the dentist, trying something new)
2. Courage is like a muscle that becomes stronger the more it's used.
3. Courage is not careless or thrill seeking foolishness.
4. Courage is that ability not to give into peer pressure and to try new things, which may fail. (It is not courageous to do something just because your friends are doing it. It is courageous NOT to do it.)
5. Not all fears are bad. Fear is a natural response intended to protect us. Courage is acting responsibly even though we are afraid. (It is not courageous to do something just because your friends are doing it. It is courageous NOT to do it.)

Developing Courage:
Realize that everyone is afraid in some way. You are not courageous just because you are not afraid. The brave person is the person who acts in spite of his or her fear, who faces the fear, and moves forward anyway.

Your fears lose their power over you when you face them. We develop courage when we make it a habit to confront our fears and view fear-inducing situations as a challenge and an opportunity to become stronger. If we do the thing we fear, it becomes less scary. For example, if you are afraid of speaking up in class, you can conquer that fear by raising your hand to speak in class every day. Each day it will become easier and less scary. It takes a lot of courage to raise your hand on the first day!
Ask the students if they think COURAGE is the same for everyone. Is everyone afraid of the same things? Are some people afraid of the dark or afraid of riding roller coasters? Should we laugh at someone who is afraid of something we are not? How does this relate to respect? Does it take more COURAGE to do something we are afraid of? Should we worry about what other people think?

The following books are related to the topic of Courage. The books are loosely divided by grade. However, you may read any of the books if you feel your class would understand and respond to it. If a child says they have already heard the story, tell them to listen to it again and think about how the characters show or don’t show Courage.

3rd - **Courage** by Bernard Waber (different types of Courage great for all grades)
   - **Absolutely Not** (learning to be brave by seeing things as they are)

4th - **Courage** by Bernard Waber (different types of Courage great for all grades)
   - **Brave Irene** by William Steig (continuing on when it would be easier to turn back)

5th – **Courage** by Bernard Waber (different types of Courage great for all grades)
   - **Seven Brave Women** by Betsy Hearne (Courage in different eras)

The book, *If You Had to Choose, What Would You Do?*, has several stories that apply to the character trait, COURAGE. These would be appropriate for any 3-5 class.

   - All Systems Go!, pg. 17
   - Best Friends, pg. 21
   - Everybody’s Doing It, pg. 41
   - Robot-Girl, pg. 85
   - Sticks and Stones, pg. 89
   - To Tell or Not to Tell, pg. 93
   - Trick or Treat, pg. 101