

# Courage

This is the final week of our Courage unit. Students will focus on courage and how the ultimate demonstration of courage is to embrace kindness in every situation, regardless of how you are being treated.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

## Main Lesson

**Whole Class Lesson**  
30 minutes



### Culture of Kindness

The class as a whole will examine the current culture of the school community and identify ways to increase kindness throughout school settings. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

## Mini Lessons

**For Small Groups**  
15 minutes



### Compliment Cards

Divide the class into small groups of 4-6. Each group is responsible for creating index cards with compliments for an adult within the school. Encourage conversation around who to select before creating the cards. No group may choose the same adult as another group. Highlight the importance of genuine, kind words as students create their cards. Deliver the cards through the school mail if possible.

**For Partners**  
15 minutes



### Kindness When Struggling

Discuss your most difficult class with your partner. How can you use kindness within this class even though you do not enjoy being there?

**For Individuals**  
15 minutes



### Kindness at Home

Create a list of 10 ways to increase kindness in your home. What words or actions can you complete to help shift the focus towards an increased level of kindness?

**Technology-Focused**  
15 minutes



### Good News!

Explore <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/>, the website that only shares positive and uplifting (and always true!) news. How does it take courage to focus on the positive even when our society and the media thrive on the negative news?

# Culture of Kindness

The class as a whole will examine the current culture of the school community and identify ways to increase kindness throughout school settings.

## Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

## Required Materials

- No materials are required for this lesson

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Explore the connection between courage and kindness.
- Practice using courage and kindness at school and at home.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Welcome to the last lesson of the last unit! Congratulations! This is a great time to celebrate all you have accomplished this year, both personally and professionally, knowing that you likely grew through pain, you reached goals through trials, and you found success after failure. We know growth is not the easy road; it is often the road less traveled and sometimes you have to have the courage to press on, to speak truth, to share kindness, and to be vulnerable. Today, though, celebrate the journey. Revel in the lessons learned and the challenges met. Recognize how brave and good and kind and persevering you were this year. Write an affirming statement about your accomplishments this year. For example:

“This year, my lesson plan about \_\_\_\_ really worked and made my students better learners.”

“This year I was at my best when \_\_\_\_.”

“This year, I was a leader in \_\_\_\_.”

Then, write a courageous goal for next year around one of the kindness concepts you taught this year. How can you infuse respect, caring, integrity, inclusiveness, respect, and courage into your teaching and leading, and what will you need to do to get there? Celebrate today, but continue the work tomorrow.



## Share

3-5 minutes

This is the fourth week in our Courage unit. So far we have explored courage and how it connects with vulnerability and humility. This last week focuses on the ultimate demonstration of courage: the act of kindness! As you are about to finish your middle school career, you can no doubt see the connection between courage and kindness!

Think about the connection between these two concepts. How have you used courage to be kind in a situation that was not very positive? (Invite student responses.)



## Inspire

3-5 minutes

Kindness doesn't always feel like an act of courage, but to truly show kindness in ALL settings can definitely be a challenge. Swallowing your pride and giving kindness to someone who is giving you hate or anger requires a special kind of courage. Even in tough situations, such as standing up for yourself and others, we can still place kindness at the center of our words and actions. This takes courage because we might not be accepted. We might even be made fun of, teased, or bullied. Using courage to be kind is always worth the risk!

Certain environments naturally create a culture of kindness. However, the same is true on the opposite side. How you present yourself and how you and your friends act towards new or different people sets the tone for the "culture" and environment you create for others that interact with you.

Take a moment to examine your day to day interactions. Are they mostly uplifting and positive? Do you tend to lean on sarcastic tones and jokes when speaking to your friends and others you talk to? How does this sarcasm change the tone of your conversation? Is sarcasm kind? (Invite student responses.)

When the environment we create is hostile, sarcastic, and competitive, it is extremely difficult to infuse it with kindness. This is also true when we find ourselves in a new environment that is negative. It is our personal responsibility to ensure that our own behaviors are not a contributing factor to this culture. If we lead with kindness and respond kindly, even when we are surrounded with hate, we can feel confident that our behavior is an asset to the group. People will enjoy our presence, rather than cringe when we are around. The choice is yours!



## Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now examine the culture within our own school. Do we have a culture of kindness within our own community? Even if we are fairly kind overall, there is always room for improvement.

Guide a discussion on kindness within our school community:

- How does our school currently create a culture of kindness?
- What examples of kindness have you observed in class? During lunch? On the bus?
- How can we increase our kindness as a school?

After discussing the current climate of the school community, divide the class up into small groups and have each group brainstorm one positive way they could increase the kindness. Each group will share their ideas with the class.

- If time allows, vote on the ideas. Which one can we easily implement? How can small changes create lasting impacts on our school culture?



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

As a class, challenge yourselves to interact in a kinder way throughout this week. When you find yourself reverting back to excessive sarcasm and negativity, remind each other that kindness starts with us! Each one of us has a decision to make each day: do we have the courage to be kind in all situations, even with people we don't agree with?