DEMONSTRATING COURAGE

BEING BRAVE IS RIGHT

ED U. GATOR HITS A HOMERUN

A TRUE FOOTBALL HERO
Have you ever seen the movie “The Wizard of Oz”? One of the characters in the movie is the Cowardly Lion. He has a very loud RRROARRRR!!! which he uses to scare people, but really, he’s afraid of everything himself. He goes through a lot of trouble and danger with his friends, the Tinman, the Scarecrow, Dorothy and her dog, Toto, to see the wizard.

The lion believes the wizard will give him courage. But you know what that Cowardly Lion finds out? Deep inside, he always had courage! He just didn’t know it! With unbelievable bravery he battles a witch, her powerful guards and hundreds of flying monkeys to rescue his friend Dorothy. Was he scared? Absolutely! But he was brave enough to do what needed to be done, even when he was afraid. That’s courage!

You and I will never have to fight against witches or flying monkeys. But there are many other things that we’re afraid of that test our courage. Some of us are scared of the dark, or spiders or mice, or going to a new place for the first time, or speaking up so other people can hear the important things we have to say. And you know what? It’s okay to be scared. Everyone’s afraid of something, even your parents or your brothers or sisters or your teachers. Being brave is trying to do something even when you’re afraid. Sometimes walking away from something scary is the bravest, and smartest thing you can do! Being brave is doing the right thing, and being honest. Being brave is helping other people.

You do those things, right? So you see, like the Cowardly Lion in “The Wizard of Oz,” you were really courageous all along, you just didn’t know it!

**Vocabulary:**

- **Character:** a person in a story, movie or play.
- **Wizard:** someone who does magic.
- **Rescue:** to save someone or something.
- **Courageous:** being very brave.

**Activity:**

In “The Wizard of Oz,” the lion becomes courageous. Lions have always been considered “the kings of the jungle” for their power, might and bravery! Find a piece of paper and draw your own picture of the brave “king of the jungle.” Then try to think of another powerful beast that could be your very own personal “animal of courage.” Draw a picture of it next to the lion and make up a name for it.
Hi friends. Ed here. I want to tell you a story about my favorite subject: baseball. Something happened to me last week that I never expected. Last Saturday I was playing ball at the park with my friends Gabe, Alice, Franklin, Will, Nancy and the Trevor twins. We were playing against a team from Mudville Corners. It was my turn to bat, and their pitcher, Connie, threw a fastball that hit me right on the forehead. YYYOUCH! That really hurt! I fell down, and all the players from both teams came over to see if I was okay. It took me a few minutes to get up, and I walked slowly to first base. I hope I never get on base that way again!

Well, two innings later when I got up to bat again, I couldn’t stop thinking about getting hit on the head. My head still hurt a little from the last time! Every time Connie pitched the ball, I closed my eyes and stepped away from the plate.

“Strike three!” I heard somebody say. Boy, I hadn’t struck out in a long time. But I kept doing it, over and over. Every time I got up to bat the same thing happened. Eyes closed. Strike three. “You’re out!”

Of Ed here hates to admit it, but I was afraid of the ball. And it only got worse. In the next three games I struck out nine more times. It got to the point where I wasn’t just scared of the ball, I was afraid to go to the park with my friends at all!

Yesterday, we were supposed to play a team from Swamp City, my old neighborhood. When Gabe came by the house to get me, I was still in my pajamas. I told him I wasn’t feeling very well, and I didn’t think I should play. But Gabe didn’t believe me.

He said, “Ed, I think you’re feeling okay, you’re just afraid of getting hit.” Then he spent a few minutes telling me about how much the team needed me, and how my not showing up would really let them down. “But I’ll probably just strike out again!” I said. Then Gabe told me how afraid he was the first time he tried to play baseball. He didn’t think he could play because of his wheelchair, but he kept trying, and he got better and better.

I said, “That’s crazy, Gabe, you’re an amazing player!”

And Gabe said, “And you are, too, Ed. You’ve just got to get over this fear of the ball.” I told him I would try.

And you know what? He was right. I was still afraid my first time at bat, but I didn’t close my eyes. On the third pitch I hit a pop fly to the pitcher. My second time up I hit a ball straight to first base, but at least I was hitting! My last time up I slammed the ball right over the left field fence. Home run! Whew, that felt great! My whole team was waiting to congratulate me at home plate. I think I’m finally getting over my fear of the ball. Thanks to Gabe I was able to get my courage back.

QUESTIONS
1) What happened to Ed that made him afraid?

2) What did Ed do every time he went up to bat?

3) Why did Ed say he was sick when Gabe came over?

4) What did Gabe tell Ed that made him decide to try again?

5) What did Ed do that was courageous?

6) What do you do well that you were once afraid to do?
THINGS I’M MOST AFRAID OF

Directions: Do you know what takes a lot of courage? Admitting you’re afraid of something. Sometimes when we tell somebody what we’re afraid of, it helps us become courageous! Below is a list of some scary things that can really give you the willies! Put a check next to the scary stuff. Then go through the list again and cross out the stuff that used to scare you, but you’re not afraid of anymore!

- dark rooms  
- bugs  
- big dogs  
- loud noises  
- meeting new people  
- scary stories  
- roller coasters  
- mice  
- getting lost  
- thunder and lightning  
- big crowds  
- jumping in the water  
- falling off a bike  
- walking into school  
- being by yourself  
- being up high  
- big slides  
- losing something

THE FACE OF COURAGE

Directions: Below is a drawing of a courageous person. It could be you, or someone you know who’s very brave. Fill in the face of this courageous person, and then design a cape for this hero to wear!

Draw the cape here.
IN THE NEWSPAPER

Directions: Some people have jobs that require them to be very courageous. Police officers, fire fighters and soldiers deal with dangerous and scary stuff almost every day. Look through the paper and try to find a story or a picture of one of these brave individuals. Cut out the picture and paste it below.

A CERTIFICATE OF COURAGE

Directions: Below is a certificate for courage and bravery. Do you know someone who deserves it? I bet you do! Try to think of something you did that took courage. Then fill in your name, color it in, and display it where everyone can see it!
Tony and his little sister Leann were having a great time at the county fair. They had been there since morning, and they had seen the cow-milking and pig-feeding exhibit and the pie-eating contest. They had gone on the roller coaster, the hay ride and the ferris wheel three times each. Tony won a stuffed animal by bobbing for apples. But it was getting late and Leann was ready to go home. "Can we go now?" she asked her big brother.

"Oh, not yet, Leann," he replied, "let's do a few more rides." But mom and dad asked us to be home before dark!" Leann said.

"Don't be such a worry wart," Tony said, and he dragged his little sister behind him.

By the time they left the fair, the sun was already going down. Leann gripped Tony's hand a little tighter. "Mom's gonna be worried," she told Tony, "and I'm afraid of the dark!"

"You're such a scaredy cat," said Tony. "We'll be home before you can count to fifty." To get home faster, Tony decided to cut through the woods near their neighborhood. At first, Leann didn't want to go, but Tony convinced her that he knew the way. Halfway through the woods, Tony realized they were lost. He stopped near a big tree and looked around in all directions.

"We're lost, aren't we?" said Leann, her eyes welling up with tears.

"We're gonna be fine," said Tony. But deep down he wasn't so sure. He was frightened himself and was trying hard to fight back his own tears. He had only gone this way home once before, and it was in the middle of the day. He felt bad that his sister was so afraid because she was his responsibility, and it was his fault they had stayed too long at the fair. He didn't want to let Leann know that he was scared too. "I was just resting for a moment," he said.

"I'm tired," cried Leann, "and I wish we were home!"

Tony did too. Suddenly, he saw a streetlight far off in the distance. "C'mon, Leann," he said softly, scooping her up and putting her on his shoulders. "We're almost there."

Tony walked quickly toward the light. His sister was heavy on his shoulders and he was getting very tired, but he tried to be strong and brave for both of them. Finally they reached the edge of the woods. From that point, it was just a few short blocks to home. When they got there, Tony's mother and father were waiting anxiously on the front porch. Leann ran up the steps and jumped into her mother's arms. Tony sighed. He had never been so happy to be home.
Harold Dennis is a great football player. He wears number 35 for the University of Kentucky Wildcats. He's very well respected by his coach, his teammates and the Wildcats fans for his ability to return kicks, and his extraordinary speed. You may have heard about this distinguished and talented athlete, but what you may not know is, Dennis was almost killed in a terrible school bus accident when he was 14 years old.

In 1988, Dennis had gone on a bus trip with other members of his church to an amusement park in Cincinnati, Ohio. On the way home, the bus was hit head-on by a drunk driver going the wrong way on the interstate. The bus quickly caught fire, and the temperature inside climbed to 2,000 degrees! Dennis and 40 other people were rescued from the burning bus, but 27 other passengers died. Although Dennis survived the accident, his face was terribly burned, and his lungs were badly injured from the poisonous fumes on the bus.

Dennis spent a long time recovering from the accident. His face is still badly scarred from the fire. His ability to run fast is remarkable, considering the damage to his lungs. But Dennis is a very courageous person. He decided not to let the accident, or his scars, stop him from doing what he wanted to do. And what he wanted to do more than anything was play football. The bravery he has shown in overcoming his injuries has been a great inspiration to everyone Dennis meets.

VOCABULARY:
Extraordinary: very special or fantastic.
Distinguished: famous and highly respected.
Recovering: getting better.
Scar: a mark left by a bad injury.
Remarkable: very great.

Harold Dennis sports his practice uniform for a University of Kentucky football workout.
TIPS

1) When we hear the words bravery and courage, we usually think of people accomplishing incredible feats. It’s important to recognize bravery and courage in ordinary terms, too. It’s courageous to tell the truth, especially when it hurts. It’s courageous to do the right thing, even when the “right” thing is the “unpopular” thing. And it’s courageous to go out of your way to help someone in need. Superheroes are in comic books and on TV. The world could use some “ordinary” heroes!

2) Speaking of superheroes... young kids sometimes have a tough time separating fantasy and reality: Television is filled with these “amazing” beings who battle entire armies, jump off buildings, lift objects 10 times their size, etc. Try to help your child understand that being brave is also being smart, and not doing something dangerous or reckless.

3) If your child is afraid of something, try to respect and understand his/her feelings. The fear is probably genuine, and quite possibly justified. No matter how silly it may seem to you, don’t belittle it. Work with your child patiently to overcome this fear. If your child realizes you’re there for support and guidance, it will help him/her regain confidence.

4) Many kids grow up thinking adults, and especially parents, are all-powerful and afraid of nothing. Make sure your child knows there’s nothing wrong with being afraid. Everyone’s been afraid of something at some point in their lives. It would help your child a great deal if you could “reveal” something that scared, or still scares you. Then perhaps you could explain the steps you’ve taken to overcome your fear.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Here’s a project that might help your child overcome a persistent fear: Work together on a story book that features your child (or a character that resembles your child) dealing with something he/she is afraid of, like the dark, or meeting new people, or getting lost in a crowd. Try to come up with a solution to the problem together. As you “write” this story with your child, it will be a great opportunity to talk in detail about the fear. Put the story in a book form, and let your child illustrate the story. Sometimes your child’s fear is based on a lack of knowledge. Look for books or videos that have already covered a similar theme. It might give you some ideas for your own story!

RESOURCES


FAMILY PLEDGE CARD

Our family has completed the Family Page together.
______________________________
Child’s name

Family members:
__________________    ___________________
__________________    ___________________

School: ___________________________

Teacher/grade: _______________________

For more information about Project: Solution, call 726-8918 or 1-800-351-1227, ext. 8033 or 8918.