



Dear Parents,

We are so excited to share with you our Character Strong Newsletter. There are many ideas and parenting tips embedded within this monthly document. The Bemis staff believes that you will find this resource to be helpful and that it will provide you with a connection to our school. We look forward to partnering with you throughout the school year by locking arms together, loving on your kiddos together and living out the belief that together we will help our students make a difference in this world by being great kids of character.

**August/September Trait: Courage**



Sincerely,

*Jeremey Whan*

Jeremey Whan

Principal

Bemis Elementary School



# Courage (Grades K-2)

## For PurposeFull Families



### EXPLANATION:

This month we're talking about the virtue of Courage - to help our children be courageous and learn to conquer things that frighten or scare them. Children need reassurance that fear is one of our feelings and to help them understand that it's okay to feel afraid. Courage isn't fearlessness, but instead our ability to choose the right thing even when we are scared! The definition we will be talking about is:

**Courage is to choose what is good, right, and kind even when it is hard or scary.**

### CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Talk with your child about what used to frighten you as a child. Be open about how you courageously worked to overcome that fear. Talk about who helped you or what strategy helped you along the way.
- Talk about the things that frighten you as an adult today. Open up an honest conversation about how you work intentionally to show Courage often.
- Make a list over dinner about who are the people in your network that show Courage. How can you tell that they have Courage? Why is it important that they show Courage? How might their example help make your Courage stronger?

### QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- What is something that scares you? What do you imagine might happen if you do that thing? Who might encourage you to try it? What could someone do to help you?
- Think back to a time when you showed or witnessed great Courage. What happened? How did it feel?
- What are some strategies that have helped you feel calm even when you're being asked to be brave? What have you learned in class about how to stay courageous even when it's hard?

### APPLICATION:

#### Books:

- [Be Brave Little One](#) by Marianne Richmond
- [Wemberly Worried](#) by Kevin Henkes
- [Don't Worry Bear](#) by Greg Foley
- [Scaredy Squirrel](#) by Melanie Watt
- [Some Things Are Scary](#) by Florence Perry Hyde
- [Courage](#) by Bernard Waber
- [The Day You Begin](#) by Jacqueline Woodson
- [What Do You Do With A Chance?](#) by Kobi Yamada
- [Jabari Jumps](#) by Gaia Cornwall

### FOR YOUR READING:

- [9 Ways to Cultivate Courage in Kids](#) by parenting expert Dr. Michele Borba

# Courage (Grades K-2)

## For PurposeFull Families



### ACTIVITY:

Encourage your children to document their experience this month as they conquer fears and gain Courage. This could be something as simple as a journal where they write something like this:

I used to be afraid to/of \_\_\_\_\_  
until I \_\_\_\_\_.

Now I show Courage by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Celebrate their baby steps and milestones as they work to become their most courageous selves.

### Courage Control

Sometimes taking control is a way to face your fears and practice Courage. Talk about something that your child fears. Have them give it a name. Then, have them take control by writing a story or drawing a picture about their fear.

**Toughness:** 2

**Time:** 1

**Type:** Pair

### PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:

#### Neighborhood Portraits

Who are the people in your neighborhood? Work together to draw a family portrait, then step out in Courage and find a neighbor that you don't know yet. Introduce yourselves and have your child introduce everyone using the family picture you drew together.

**Toughness:** 2

**Time:** 1

**Type:** Group

#### Conversations in Courage

What's something that you've been afraid to discuss with your child? Something that might be difficult to explain about our community or the world. Chances are they will hear about it eventually, and it may come from someone who's less informed or less supportive than you. Have a courageous conversation with your child. It could be about bullying, the environment, uncertainty, etc.. Remind them that love and support are two tools that we can use to practice Courage. Brainstorm ways they can practice Courage around the issue you discuss.

**Toughness:** 2

**Time:** 4

**Type:** Group

#### From Class to Community

Talk about students in your child's class. Who's someone they don't quite know yet? Is there a family that you don't know either? Invite that child and their family over for a playdate to build community between children and adults!

**Toughness:** 3

**Time:** 2

**Type:** Group

# Courage (Grades 3-5)

## For PurposeFull Families



### EXPLANATION:

As a school family this month, we are delving into the value of Courage by examining how it looks, sounds, and feels. We want to help our children be courageous and learn to conquer things that frighten or scare them. Children need reassurance that fear is one of our feelings and to remind them that it's okay to be scared and to feel afraid. The definition they are learning this month for Courage is:

**Courage is to choose what is good, right, and kind even when it is hard or scary.**

### CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- When we talk about tackling things that frighten or scare us, it's important that we validate fear as one of the many feelings that we experience. Talk with your child about what scared you as you were growing up. Maybe it's a fear of the dark? Or heights? Maybe it's a fear of snakes? Maybe it's a fear of not meeting someone's expectations? How did you overcome those fears and/or show Courage in the face of those fears?
- What scares you today as a parent or guardian? How about as an adult? How do you muster the Courage to be brave despite those fears?
- Share a story about a time that you overcame a fear or practiced Courage. What or who helped you? How did you feel before, during and after? What did you learn from the experience? How did it change you?

### QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- What does Courage mean to you? Do you see yourself as courageous? Why or why not?
- Talk about a time that you've needed to show Courage. What was that experience like?
- Talk about a time when you've witnessed Courage. How did that feel? What did it look like?
- When have you wished for more Courage?
- Who is your role model or example of Courage? Why?

### APPLICATION:

#### Books:

- [\*Unspoken\*](#) by Henry Cole
- [\*Gifts from the Enemy\*](#) by Trudy Ludwig
- [\*The Girl With A Mind For Math\*](#) by Julia Finley Mosca
- [\*Ron's Big Mission\*](#) by Rose J. Blue
- [\*New Shoes\*](#) by Susan Lynn Myer
- [\*Esperanza Rising\*](#) by Pam Munoz Ryan
- [\*Brown Girl Dreaming\*](#) by Jacqueline Woodson
- [\*The Sign of the Beaver\*](#) by Elizabeth George Speare
- [\*Mouse of My Heart\*](#) by Margaret Wise Brown

### FOR YOUR READING:

- [\*9 Ways to Cultivate Courage in Kids\*](#) by parenting expert Dr. Michele Borba



# Courage (Grades 3-5)

## For PurposeFull Families



### ACTIVITY:

Talk about this quote around the dinner table and share what it means to you.

“Courage is the commitment to begin without any guarantee of success” -Goethe

After dinner, make a Vision Board collage with pictures, drawings, symbols and words that represent things you’d be willing to step out in Courage to try.

### PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:

#### New Recipe, New Friend

Work together in the kitchen to try a new recipe, then step out in Courage by delivering it to a neighbor that you haven’t met yet.

Toughness: 2

Time: 1

Type: Partner

#### Courage Over Challenges

Brainstorm with your child things you both would’ve liked to do, but find intimidating. Maybe it’s a new hobby, sharing your art or invention with others, or going on an adventure somewhere. Go out there and give it a try, then take a selfie to capture the memory!

Toughness: 3

Time: 2

Type: Partner

#### Search for Courage

Talk with your children about people who have shown Courage in real life. Look for courageous examples in your family, local community, and in the world. Brainstorm ways that you can acknowledge someone who has shown Courage. For example, perhaps you can take cookies to a local law enforcement office. Maybe you can mail a thank you card to someone who is serving in the armed forces. You could even take a trip to the local library to research someone in our world who has shown Courage and bravery. By pointing out acts of Courage, your children can see practical examples of the trait!

Toughness: 2

Time: 2

Type: Group

#### Courage Celebration Ceremony

What’s something that continues to scare you, but you were willing to do it anyway? Yay YOU. Share a time that you stepped out in courage this week as you gather around the dinner table for a Courage Celebration Ceremony. Explain not only what you did, but how it felt before and after. Then let your family encourage you and cheer you on. Decide on a monthly routine where you have a Courage Celebration Ceremony for someone who did something bold and include some fun additions like dessert or balloons or a silly certificate of Courage.

Toughness: 3

Time: 1

Type: Group