

# 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



### Verbal vs. Non-Verbal Communication

The class as a whole will take turns exploring the importance of lining up your verbal and non-verbal communication when demonstrating genuine kindness in tough situations. (See page 2 for lesson details.)

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## Mini Lessons

**For Small Groups**  
15 minutes



### Kindness Chains

Divide the class into small groups of 4-6. Each group is responsible for creating a chain of kind words around a particular topic chosen by the teacher (examples include friends, staff, family, our community, our environment, etc.). Each student in the group must create one chain link with a kind phrase connected to their group topic. At the end, connect all the group chains together. Hang your kindness chain outside in the hall and invite the rest of the school to add to it!

**For Partners**  
15 minutes



### Kindness in Action

With your partner, share an example of something you've recently watched or read about demonstrating kindness. What common attributes did both of your examples have? What common themes run through those that are courageous?

**For Individuals**  
15 minutes



### Courage to Be Kind

Think back to a time when you or someone you know demonstrated the courage to be kind in the face of adversity. How were the kind words received? How did they change the conversation? What might have happened if the hateful or angry words were met with equally angry words vs kind words?

**Technology-Focused**  
15 minutes



### The Great Kindness Challenge App

Explore The Great Kindness Challenge app. If possible, divide the class up into small groups and use in-class technology to download the app and become familiar with its components. If not, review the app as a class and try to carve out time to announce the daily kindness challenge (or ask the class if they were able to download it) at the beginning of class moving forward!

# Verbal vs. Non-Verbal Communication

The class as a whole will take turns exploring the importance of lining up your verbal and non-verbal communication when demonstrating genuine kindness in tough situations.

## Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

## Required Materials

- Index Cards
- Pencils
- Scenario cards (see below)

## 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 second year of middle school, you can probably relate to 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

4-6 minutes

Kindness may not feel like an act of courage, but to truly show kindness in ALL settings can definitely be a challenge. It's important that we are genuine in our kindness towards others. Your words and actions must match up when you are expressing yourself. When you say one thing, but your body language and facial expressions show something else, you are not showing integrity and that is far from kind.

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!



## Empower

15 minutes

Explain that the class will now play a game aimed at aligning our words and non-verbal communication in a way that conveys kindness.

### **Step 1** Explain Verbal vs. Non-Verbal communication

Did you know that your words only communicate 10% of what you mean? The other 90% is through your body language, facial expressions, and tone of your voice. Today we will take turns practicing how our non-verbal communication influences the message we are trying to convey to the person we are talking to. When we are trying to use kindness in tough situations, we need to pay attention to not just our words, but also our tone, facial expressions, and body language.

### **Step 2** Role Plays

Divide the class up into groups of 4-6. Explain that each group must present their scenario using the words provided, but the first scene must incorporate negative non-verbal communication that does not line up with the kind words spoken. The second scene must repeat the scenario, but this time with both kind words and kind non-verbal communication.

Provide each group with one of the following scenarios (see attached for cards to hand out if desired):

- A bully just called you a loser. You turn around and say, "It's okay if I lose sometimes; I'm confident in me!"
- A student you do not get along with is in your group for a huge project. They ask to be your partner for the writing section. You respond with, "Sure, we can work together."
- It is your turn as team captain during P.E. You wind up having to choose a person that really dislikes sports and you are very competitive. As you pick them you say, "Welcome to the team!"
- Your teacher pairs you up with a very smart student and you don't really see the point in even doing any work, because you might get something wrong. You tell them, "Good thing I have you to help me!"
- Your parents make you work with your sibling on cleaning out the garage. You really don't want to work with your sibling, but you are trying to be optimistic so you say, "Alright, let's work together and knock this out!"



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

Using index cards, have each student answer the following question as an exit ticket:

- Which form of non-verbal communication is the hardest for you to control and why? (facial expressions, tone, body language, etc.)

Based on the answers of the class, review this topic again in the future if time allows. You can also bring it up organically if situations arise in which verbal and non-verbal communication does not align within your classroom.

## Verbal vs. Non-verbal Role-play Scenarios

**Scenario 1:** A bully just called you a loser. You turn around and say, “It’s okay if I lose sometimes; I’m confident in me!”

**Scenario 2:** A student you do not get along with is in your group for a huge project. They ask to be your partner for the writing section. You respond with, “Sure, we can work together.”

**Scenario 3:** It is your turn as team captain during P.E. You wind up having to choose a person that really dislikes sports and you are very competitive. As you pick them you say, “Welcome to the team!”

**Scenario 4:** Your teacher pairs you up with a very smart student and you don’t really see the point in even doing any work, because you might get something wrong. You tell them, “Good thing I have you to help me!”

**Scenario 5:** Your parents make you work with your sibling on cleaning out the garage. You really don’t want to work with your sibling, but you are trying to be optimistic so you say, “Alright, let’s work together and knock this out!”