Personal Jar of Encouragement

This lesson on Courage sets the focus on kindness as the ultimate form of courageousness. This lesson begins with kindness to self, through the creation of a personal jar of encouragement.

Courage Sub-Concepts
Kindness

Lesson Timeframe
45 minutes

Required Materials
❏ Jar with lid for each student (can use empty food jars, etc.
❏ Stickers
❏ Art Supplies
❏ Index cards (10 per student)

Standards Map
This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the Standards Map for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will be able to:

- Create 10 personal statements of encouragement to demonstrate kindness to self.
- Explain how it takes courage to be kind to ourselves.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Courage starts with kindness. You cannot pour from an empty glass. This week, focus on your internal dialogue. Say something nice to yourself in the mirror at the beginning and end of each day. It takes courage to be kind.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Allow students to illustrate each encouraging statement.
- Allow students to translate their words of encouragement into their native language on the back of each paper after attempting in English.

Share

5 minutes

Play 'Would you dare?"

Read each statement below and have students stand up if they would dare to do the activity. Have them sit back down after voting.

Would you dare to...
- Eat a food that you've never heard of?
- Go on a roller coaster that goes upside down?
- Sing in a talent show?
- Show a new student around the school?
- Stand up to a bully?

It takes courage to try new things and speak up. Let's learn more about courage today.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
FOUNDATION®

Inspire

What is Courage?

7-10 minutes

Explain that **courage** means *being brave when facing new or difficult circumstances*. We often think of this as bravery, however one of the most important ways to show courage is through kindness. Today we will focus on the Courage to be yourself.
- **Courage to be yourself:** It might sound silly, but it takes courage to be yourself. Most of us don't think about how we treat ourselves, but kindness actually starts with the things you say and do to yourself first! If you can't be kind to you, how can you expect to be kind to others?

So how does this connect to courage? It takes courage to be YOU at all times! You are a unique individual - you have your own preferences, interests and talents. You are an original and no one is exactly like you, even your close friends or family.

Sometimes others won't like what you like or might make fun of you because you look or act different. You can use courage to stay true to your beliefs, even when you might not fit in.

Words of Encouragement

3-5 minutes

Explain that one way to show kindness to yourself is by speaking words of encouragement. Words of encouragement are short phrases that make you feel better about yourself, give you motivation when you feel down, and put a smile on your face.

When you say or read words of affirmation to yourself every day, it helps you feel better about who you are inside. The better you feel about yourself, the more courage you have to choose kindness with others.

Empower

15 minutes

Today we will focus on how we can use courage to be kind to ourselves. Explain that each student will create a personal jar of encouragement that they will fill with words of encouragement to be read aloud to themselves before leaving school each day.

Note: These jars are for personal use only. Remind students of this and set clear expectations around only accessing your own jar.

Step 1:
Provide a jar for each student. Baby food jars, sauce jars or mason jars work well. Allow them to decorate it however they see fit as long as it is labeled in some fashion (initials, name, drawing, etc.).

Step 2:

Have each student write 10 words/phrases of encouragement to themselves using the index cards. They can add illustrations, stickers, etc. as desired. Remind them that these are personal and no one else will have access to them. Here are some ideas to get them started:
- What is one memory that always brings a smile to your face? Write it down to remind yourself of happy times!
- If you had a friend that was feeling down, what would you tell them to cheer them up? Write it down for yourself!
- What song/movie/game bring you enjoyment? Write down a phrase that reminds you of that!
- Who do you always turn to to feel better? Write their name down and a phrase they might say to boost your spirits.

The goal is to have 10 cards of encouragement created by each student. There is no right or wrong way to complete this activity, so encourage them to be creative. The goal is to be kind to yourself and have the courage to read these words daily!

Step 3:
Have the students fold their personal words of encouragement and Instruct them to read one aloud to themselves every day before heading home for the rest of the week. They can take their jar home as well to keep the momentum going. Reading it at the end of the day helps to set a positive tone for the transition from school back to home.

Reflect

5-7 minutes

After completing the jars of encouragement, ask for volunteers to read one aloud to the class. If no one volunteers, make sure you have a personal example ready and read it aloud to the class.
- Provide positive feedback for students as they share.
- Remind them that just the act of sharing a personal affirmation takes courage!

CASEL

DESIGNATED

SELect Program

DESIGNATED BY CASEL AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SELect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/