

# Lesson 7: The Courage to Act

## Lesson Overview

**Purpose:** To help students understand that it takes courage to be an upstander, and what using courage feels like.

### Timing: 60 min



This lesson is designed to take 60 minutes.

### Objectives



By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe how courage helps them to be an upstander.
- Identify a time when they have acted courageously and made a difference.
- Recognize what courage feels like by taking a risk in a game.
- Understand the connection between courage and peacemaking.

### Agenda



#### Opening 15 min

Welcome

Review

Preview

#### Focus Activities 35 min

Connecting with Courage

Reading *The Hundred Dresses* Excerpts

Trust Walk

#### Closing 10 min

Reflection

Assessment

Wrap-up

### Supplies



- Copy of one student's handout 4-6A from previous lesson (*Scenarios of Consequences*)
- Copy of the book *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes
- Blindfolds (or students can hold hands over their eyes)
- Handout 4-7A: Sentence Stems

## Key Words

# Aa

## Before You Teach



- **Courage:** The ability to face difficulty and overcome fears; taking a risk.
  
- Get permission to share a student’s handout from the previous lesson.
- Familiarize yourself with *The Hundred Dresses* and, in advance, mark off the following three sections to be excerpted for this lesson (see Read Aloud Activity):
  - **Part 1: pp. 10–18**, beginning in the middle of page 10 with “Wanda Petronski. Most of the children...” and ending at the bottom of page 18 with “...would stop teasing Wanda Petronski”.
  - **Part 2: pp. 47–50**, beginning on p. 47 with “Everybody listened closely...” and ending on p. 50 with “...and the hundred dresses were beautiful.”
  - **Part 3: pp. 62–63**, beginning on p. 62 with “At last, Maddie sat up in bed...” and ending on p. 63 with “...Maddie fell asleep.”
- You may also find it helpful to incorporate the “transition notes” found in the lesson (a few sentences intended to catch students up with what happens in the story in-between excerpts).

## Lesson Plan

### Opening (15 minutes)

#### 1. Welcome

**Goal: To welcome students to Peace First time, review last week’s lesson, and preview this lesson with students.**

Use your Quiet Signal to get students’ attention. Welcome students to Peace First time.

#### 2. Review

**Review** with students the activities they did last week.



**Write** the words **choices** and **consequences** on the board and call on students to provide definitions.

**Read aloud** one entry from the **Scenarios of Consequences** handout (4-6A) that the students wrote last week.

(First get student’s permission to read it aloud.)



**Ask:**

*What kept the bystanders we have learned about like Alice and Tariq from standing up?*

#### 3. Preview

**Direct** students’ attention to today’s agenda and the title of the lesson, “The Courage to Act.”

**Tell** students that today they will be talking about courage and how sometimes it is hard to have the courage to stand up for others.

TRANSITION



**Tell students that they will now read a story about courage.**

**Organize the class so that all students can see the pictures as you read the excerpt from *The Hundred Dresses* aloud.**



## Focus Activities (35 minutes)

### Activity Overview

This excerpt teaches a powerful lesson about the regret that can come with choosing not to stand up for someone, and the importance of finding the courage to do so. Students will recognize that believing in themselves and practicing personal courage can help them to become better peacemakers.

*The Hundred Dresses* tells the story of a Polish girl named Wanda Petronski who is teased by the girls at her school because she lives in a poor section of town and wears the same faded blue dress every day. Wanda insists that she has 100 beautiful dresses at home, which only brings more laughter and teasing, as no one believes her. Another student, named Maddie, is very uncomfortable with the teasing; she knows it's wrong, but she says nothing. Wanda eventually moves away to the "big city," where her father believes their family will find greater acceptance. Later in the story, Wanda wins the school drawing contest with her submission of one hundred dresses, which she did in fact design herself. However, because she no longer attends the school, she is not present to receive this recognition.

Maddie is the focus of the excerpts indicated in this lesson. Once Wanda moves away, Maddie feels guilty for not having stood up for Wanda. Maddie reflects on her role as a bystander in this situation and resolves to have the courage to never just stand by in similar situations again.

Then, students will work in pairs. One member of each pair will be blindfolded, and the other will be the "guide." Guides may not touch their (blindfolded) partners unless partners request they do so, or unless it is to remove their partners from harm. Guides must lead their partners from one end of the classroom to the other until their partner touches the wall on the opposite side of the class, but they must be aware of any obstacles and keep their partners' comfort and safety in mind at all times.

## 1. Connecting With Courage



**Goal:** To explore the concept of courage through reading an excerpt from *The Hundred Dresses*. They then continue to explore how to act courageously and what it feels like, even when it is hard, by playing a game.



**Write** the word **courage** in the middle of the board.

Use this for developing a courage concept web.



**Teacher Tip:** In a concept web, a word or idea is written at the center. Lines (like spokes) are drawn outward to create a web. This can help students visualize how their ideas are connected.



**Ask:**

*What words or images come to mind when you hear the word **courage**?*



**Map** students' responses on the concept web. Next, follow up on their responses by probing further. For example, if a student says, "bravery," ask for an example of bravery. If a student says, "Martin Luther King," ask how he demonstrated courage.



**Ask:**

If students only offer examples of "big" acts of courage, **ask:**

*Can someone give me an example of a small act of courage?*

*Possible answer:*

- Speaking up in class when you feel nervous

**Ask:**

*Who can share an example of a time they acted courageously?*

*What does it feel like to be courageous?*

**Tell** students that they will have another chance to share ways in which they have acted courageously later in class. Remind them that today we are talking about how it takes courage to stand up and help others when they are being excluded.

**FOCUS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED (35 minutes)**
**2. Reading *The Hundred Dresses* Excerpts**


**Teacher Tip:** Another book that can be used to discuss standing up for others is *One* by Kathryn Otoshi. Though this book is typically read with younger children, it contains a deep, metaphorical message about the courage it takes to be an upstander, and can be used with older students who are mature enough to understand the metaphors and discuss them. If you choose to read this book, be sure to emphasize this to your students—they are using their “fourth-grade lens” to look for the deeper meaning and “hidden messages” in this book.



**Tell** students that you are going to read them a story based on the real events of the author’s life when she was a girl. The author grew up in Connecticut during World War I (in the early 1910s) at a time when many people were immigrating to the United States. Many people came to the United States from eastern Europe, including the country of Poland, where Wanda is from.

**Ask** students to pay special attention to Maddie, her role in the story, and how she feels about herself as the story goes on.

**Tell** students to think about how courage and upstanding are important in this story.

**You will now read** the excerpts from *The Hundred Dresses* aloud to students. As you read, pause after each section and follow the corresponding activities/questions below.

You may also choose to stop at other places in the story to keep students engaged by asking other questions.

Be sure that all students can view the illustrations.



**Read Aloud: Part 1** (what you’ve pre-marked from pp. 10–18).

**FOCUS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED (35 minutes)**



**Pause** after reading Part 1 aloud.

**Ask:**

*Why does Maddie look at the marbles in the palm of her hand here?*

*Possible answers:*

- She is embarrassed
- To avoid eye contact with Wanda/Peggy
- She knows what Peggy is doing is wrong

**Activity: Choices and Consequences Scenarios**



**Say:**

*To help us get into Maddie’s shoes, let’s think about the choices she has at this point of the story.*

**Ask:**

*What are some of the choices Maddie has at this point in the story?  
Let’s try to name all the choices she has here.*

**Introduce** students to the column headings in the Choices and Consequences chart.

**Write** student suggestions on poster board or chart paper if you want it for the Peacemaking Wall. Here is an example of what the chart could look like:

CHOICES	CONSEQUENCES FOR MADDIE	CONSEQUENCES FOR WANDA	CONSEQUENCES FOR PEGGY

**FOCUS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED (35 minutes)**

List student responses in first column, under “Choices.”

*Possible answers:*

- Maddie can stay quiet and not say anything
- She can stand up to Peggy
- She can defend Wanda
- She could tell a teacher



**Say:**

*Now let’s take a look at each choice and think of all the possible consequences. What are the consequences for Maddie, for Peggy, or for Wanda if Maddie chooses this action?*

Be sure to **emphasize** nuance here, acknowledging that there are also risks to being an upstander (i.e., if Maddie stands up to Peggy, Peggy may no longer be her friend). For each choice, emphasize whether it reflects bystander behavior or upstanding behavior.

**Explain** to students that you will now continue reading the story. Remind students to continue to pay close attention to Maddie, especially on the choice she makes in the story and what the consequences of that choice are. Who is affected by Maddie’s choice?



**Say:**

*The children in Room 13 learn that Wanda Petronski has won a class art contest with her drawings of 100 beautiful dresses. Wanda has been absent from school for a few days and does not learn that she has won. Then the teacher receives a note from Wanda’s father and reads it to the class.*

**Read Aloud: Part 2** (what you’ve pre-marked from pp. 47–50).

**Pause** after reading Part 2.

**Ask:**

*Why does Maddie want to find Wanda?*

*Possible answers:*

- She wants to apologize for standing by
- She feels guilty for having been a bystander

**FOCUS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED (35 minutes)**



**Ask:**

*Why does Maddie think she is a coward?*

*Possible answers:*

- Maddie knew that what was going on was wrong (unlike Peggy, who we think was just “having fun”), and so it was worse for Maddie to stand by
- She reflects that she should’ve had the COURAGE to stand up when she knew that what Peggy and the others were doing to Wanda was wrong

**Explain** to students that you will now finish reading the story.

**Say:**

*Maddie and Peggy decide to go to Boggins Heights to look for Wanda, hoping she hasn’t moved yet. But the house is empty and they return home. That night, Maddie cannot get to sleep.*

**Read Aloud: Part 3** (what you’ve pre-marked from pp. 62–63).

**Debrief**



**Ask:**

*What choice did Maddie make?*

*What were some of the consequences of this choice?*

*Possible answers:*

- She feels terrible that Wanda moves away
- Peggy never realizes that what she was doing was wrong

**Ask:**

*What does Maddie decide about how she will act in the future?*

Answer: She will be an **upstander**.

**Ask:**

*What was she missing to go from being a bystander to an upstander?*

Answer: **Courage**.

**FOCUS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED (35 minutes)**



**Ask:**

*Why does it take courage to be an upstander?*

*Possible answer:*

- Because there are risks to being an upstander—you need courage to overcome them

**Ask:**

*Is it hard to always have courage and be an upstander?*

It's important to acknowledge with students that, yes, it is sometimes hard to be an upstander.

**TRANSITION**



**Now that we have explored the courage it takes to be an upstander, we are going to do an activity that helps us practice using our own courage.**

**3. Trust Walk: Finding the Courage Within**



**Goal: To practice finding and using their courage as well as recognize what it feels like to be courageous.**



**Teacher Tip:** You may want to assign student pairs beforehand. An alternative to blindfolding students is to have them keep their eyes closed.



**Say:**

*We know from the excerpt we just read that having the courage to act isn't always easy, and to be honest, it doesn't always feel good. You might feel nervous, worried, or scared, all at the same time. Because it is important to learn to recognize what it feels like to be courageous, we are going to play a game today to help us do that. Then, you will know what having courage feels like to you, which will make it easier to be courageous and stand up when others are being excluded.*

**FOCUS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED (35 minutes)**
**Ask:**

*Have any of you ever tried something that made you nervous, but you made the choice to be courageous, and did it anyway?*

You could give students the **example** of going on a scary roller coaster.

Be sure to **emphasize** to students that making the choice to do something that makes them nervous is using their courage.

**Say:**

*When you are being courageous, you may feel nervous— your hands may get sweaty, or you may feel like you have butterflies in your stomach— but peacemakers should try to overcome their nervousness and stand up to stop exclusion when they can.*

*The game we are about to play today will take courage, and I want you to pay attention to how you feel while you are playing the game.*

**Pair up** the students.

**Tell** students that it will be each guide’s responsibility to lead his/her blindfolded partner across the room until the partner touches the wall on the opposite side of the room, while ensuring that he/she does not get hurt. Then, after five minutes, the pairs will switch roles. Be sure to announce when it is time to switch. You may want to give a 30-second “warning.”

Guides may not touch their (blindfolded) partners, unless partners request they so do, or unless it is to remove their partners from harm. Guides may lead their partners toward the other side of the room however they choose, but they must be aware of any obstacles and keep their partners’ comfort and safety in mind at all times.


**Say:**

*As guides, you are acting to protect a vulnerable person, just like an upstander does. An upstander is aware of when someone needs his or her help—is vulnerable—and then acts to provide that help.*

**FOCUS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED (35 minutes)**



**Teacher Tip:** If the space does not allow for all students to touch the wall at the other end at the same time, split the class in half and let one half watch while the other half walks around the room, then switch. Be sure to remind students to make sure they are being safe. For example, to help students to think about this before beginning the activity, ask them for specific ideas about how guides can help make sure blindfolded partners remain safe.

**Debrief**



**Ask:**

*What kinds of skills did you use in this game?*

*How did your body feel when you were blindfolded? Were you nervous?*

*What was easy or hard about being blindfolded? Why?*

*How did it feel to be the guide? What about it was easy or hard? Why?*

*Did you need courage when you were guiding your partner?*

*Did you need courage to be blindfolded?*

*How can the courage that you had today help you when you see someone being excluded?*

## Closing (10 minutes)

### 1. Reflection

**Direct** students' attention to the courage concept web and ask if they have anything they want to add.



**Say:**

*Today we have learned that to be an upstander we often need to have courage. Peacemakers try to have courage so that they can stand up for others. Remember how Maddie felt at the end of the story? When Wanda was still at her school, she didn't have the courage to **stand up** for her, and once Wanda moved away, she regretted this so much that she decided she never wants to just **stand by** in a situation she knows is wrong ever again.*

**Ask:**

*Is Maddie a peacemaker?*

*Why or why not?*

**Help** students understand that sometimes having courage isn't enough. You can't always stand up, because sometimes the risks are too great. But peacemakers try to weigh their choices and consequences and to do the right thing whenever they feel it is safe to do so.

**CLOSING CONTINUED (10 minutes)**

**2. Assessment**



Distribute **Handout 4-7A: Sentence Stems**. Ask students to write an ending to each of the sentences.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Sentence Stems**

Write an ending to each of the sentences below.

1. I have used my courage to act as a peacemaker by...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. I'm going to show that I have courage to stand up for others by...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

GRADE 4: PEACEMAKER SKILLS LESSON 7: 4-7A SENTENCE STEMS © 2012 Peace First

**Direct** students' attention to the Peacemaking Path. Tell them that today they will add this handout as the next step along the path.

**3. Wrap-up**



**Explain** to students that in the next lesson they will practice being upstanders by using their courage.

**Tell** students it is now time to transition out of Peace First time and into their next classroom activity.

**Use** your Quiet Signal. When you feel students are ready, move on to your next activity.



**Teacher Tip:** If time allows, close with the Pass the Pulse ritual.

Have students form a circle and hold hands to pass the Pass the Pulse. Designate a student to start the pulse by squeezing the hand of the person on their right. As they send the Pass the Pulse around the circle, ask students to visualize the positive peacemaking energy that is connecting them.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Sentence Stems

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Write an ending to each of the sentences below.

**1. I have used my courage to act as a peacemaker by...**

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**2. I'm going to show that I have courage to stand up for others by...**

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