

We are as brave as Maria, the astronaut



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AGE	5 – 6 years
VALUE	Courage, bravery
MATERIALS	Pictures of astronauts, moon, and star. Additionally, pictures of a spaceship, an astronaut floating, the cosmos... can be also shown to the children (see links at the end).
DURATION	45 minutes
GROUP SIZE	Up to 25 children
OBJECTIVES	Promote children's understanding of courage as a value via role playing.
METHODOLOGY	Narration, dialogue, observation
AUTHOR	Innovation Training Centre



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STEP BY STEP IMPLEMENTATION

Having courage means that children will be brave as they meet new experiences, difficult situations, and/or dangerous encounters. Also, courage may involve being firm because of strong moral convictions. In either case, there may be feelings of fear, anxiety, or apprehension.

Age considerations:

5 to 6-YEAR-OLDS: Five to six-year-olds are likely to follow directions to receive rewards, avoid punishment, or satisfy an authority figure. They are emotionally attached to parents and teachers and crave approval. Therefore, they are usually willing to do what adults ask them to do and to believe anything that adults say...unless the adults have shown themselves to be untrustworthy. Youngsters these ages are still learning by what they observe. So, it is important to maintain good examples of courageous behaviour in the classroom. For example, you can implement introductory easy activities in the class: role modelling that the teacher finds money, do you keep it or do you seek its owner? Assist children to verbalize their feelings as they examine situations, consider possible alternative responses, discuss the consequences of each response, select one line of action, and evaluate the results.

Step 1

Read the children a story about a girl: MARIA.

In a distant country, where the Tajo river runs between birch forests, there lived a long-haired girl called Maria, who from an early age, wanted to visit the moon and its little sisters, the stars.

Maria was naughty and very active but sometimes she was very, very quiet, laying in the ground and looking at the sky, where at night she could see the moon and thousands of shiny stars.

Maria remained very serious looking at the clouds, as according to what her grandfather had told her, they were foam or cotton curtains behind which the moon and the stars had their house. And speaking in a low voice so that none could hear her, smiling, she said to them:

- *Yes, pretty moon... yes, pretty stars, do not wink at me anymore, do not make any more signs to me. Soon, very soon, I will visit you!*

And one good day, Maria riding in a fast spaceship threw herself into the space, laughing and singing.

Maria saw so many pretty things: blue seas, green forests, great mountains and rivers... and the great Tajo river saying goodbye to her.

But suddenly, when she was very-very high, so high that she could almost touch the stars, Maria, fell off her bed.



- *Yes, as you can now imagine: Maria was dreaming!*

Everything then disappeared and Maria was very disappointed.

Her mom came and laid her down in bed and lovingly she whispered in her ear:

- *When you grow up, you will be an astronaut: but to be an astronaut you will have to be very brave. Sleep my love! Tomorrow we will talk again about courageous people.*



Ask the children if they liked the story. Ask them why they think that Maria's mom told her that they were going to talk about courageous people.

Step 2

In this step you will introduce children about brave and courageous people: those who act with decision and bravery even when they are a bit scared.

Go on with the astronauts example: to travel to the cosmos is quite a challenge and astronauts are very brave people (show them pictures or videos about astronauts) because they risk their lives going up exploring the cosmos, which is a very-very distant place: some of them have even reached the moon! (show them pictures or videos of men reaching the moon).

To travel to space, astronauts must wear special suits. They must take oxygen, water, and food in the spaceship (show them a picture of a spaceship) because where they go, there is no water, food or oxygen to breathe. It is a very dangerous trip.

They must follow a hard training to be able to live in a spaceship because when the rocket leaves our planet, the astronauts start to float like a feather in the air (show a picture of an astronaut floating in the air).

Remember that Maria's mom told her that to be an astronaut you need to be a brave young woman. It is true but it is also a very interesting, useful, and beautiful trip as also thanks to the astronaut's courage, today we know a lot better the cosmos and the universe!

Ask the children:

- **Are the astronauts brave? Why?**
- **Would you like to be an astronaut?**
- **How do we call the people who do great challenges?**





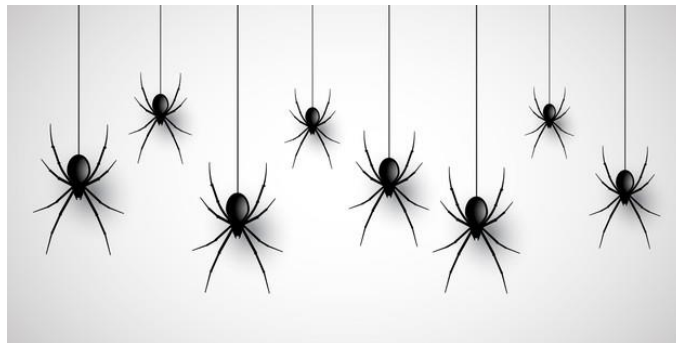
Step 3

Now, tell the children about your fear/s (spiders, dark spaces, heights...etc.) and invite some 3-4 volunteer children to speak about their fears:

- **What are you afraid of?**

And focus on those who have not spoken yet, and ask them:

- **What would you like to do that you haven't done it yet?** (as example: climb a mountain, ski, eat a very exotic dish...etc.)



Step 4

Now tell them: sometimes courage is about doing the scary thing we were talking about before, and sometimes it's about doing the right thing.

Let's say, you are in a summer camp and some of the older kids propose to watch a scary movie (for example: *Annabel*, which is PG 13, meaning it can be viewed by children aged 13 or older).

Ask them: **Do you think the brave thing is watching the movie? Does it feel right?**

Saying 'no' to something that doesn't feel right is one of the bravest things' we humans can do. Tell them there are three clues that can help them wade through the noise and find the right thing to do:

- Will it break an important rule?
- Will it hurt someone?
- Does it feel right for you?

Deciding whether something is right or wrong is the first step. The next part – which is the tricky part – is finding a safe out. **It's not always easy saying 'no', this is where courage happens.**



Some options might involve:

1. Leaving saying you have something else to do,
2. Suggesting something else to do instead (Watching another movie?),
3. Blame a parent (my mum/dad said I couldn't watch movies rated for older kids),
4. There's no way I'm getting myself into trouble today: no,
5. Make a joke ('NOT worth the trouble').

So, if you are proposed to watch a scary movie: What would you do?????

Links to pictures:

Spaceship: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/modern-spaceship-background-with-flat-deisgn_2788041.htm#page=1&query=spaceship&position=3

Astronaut: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/cute-astronaut-super-hero-cartoon-vector-icon-illustration-science-technology-icon_10411826.htm#page=1&query=astronaut&position=2

Moon: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/night-landscape-background-with-big-moon_1084495.htm#page=1&query=moon&position=0

Spiders: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/halloween-banner-design-with-hanging-spiders_10412422.htm#page=1&query=scary&position=33

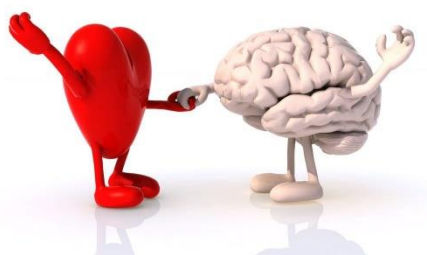


CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

OBSERVED BEHAVIOR	YES	NO	COMENTS
The children were able to understand bravery from the story			
The children knew how to express their fears and something new they would like to do			
The children answered correctly the question involved in step 3 (<i>if you are proposed to watch a scary movie: what would you do?</i>)			
The children needed help to answer			
The children knew what to say			

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear
– Nelson Mandela

Self-care Hints for Childcare professionals and teachers:



Just breathe. Simply focusing on inhaling and exhaling can relax you and can be done anywhere. Breathe in through your nose to the count of three and then release the breath through your mouth to the count of three. Slowing down and taking a minute to just breathe can help put you into a calmer emotional state. Try spending one minute of each hour simply focusing on your breathing and nothing else, and you may be surprised at how much better you feel.