

Courage



Learning & Growing
STEPS
Learning & Growing



Contents:

The Wolf and the Cobra	4
He Did It.	8
Christopher Columbus	9
Bamboo.	12
Prayer and Memory Fun	14
Courageous Bamboo	15
What Is Courage?	16
My Courage Kit	17
From Jesus—with Love	19



Keep on believing, don't ever give up!
Keep on believing, don't be discouraged!
Keep on believing, don't quit!

By Amber Darley and Agnes Lemaire

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The Wolf and the Cobra

Young Wolf knew he was a privileged animal today. As he pranced* along the long winding path of the green forest trail, he carried with him a wonderful secret—this would be the day that he would conquer Clever Cobra.

As he walked past the entrance to Little Raccoon's den, Little Raccoon poked his head out and said, "Where are you headed today, Young Wolf?"

Young Wolf was happy to announce to Little Raccoon the great quest that lay before him. Little Raccoon listened excitedly, and responded with many "oohs" and "aahhs," but felt it was his duty to remind Young Wolf how tricky and smart Clever Cobra really was. Why, Little Raccoon had lost many of his dearest friends to Clever Cobra's deadly bite.

Young Wolf looked intently at Little Raccoon, and shared his sympathy at the loss of Little Raccoon's friends.

"Yes," Young Wolf said at last, "it was tragic. But it shall not happen to me, for this morning I received a message from the King of the Forest, saying that I could be confident of victory!"

Little Raccoon smiled, but again warned Young Wolf to be careful of Clever Cobra's tricks. He then turned to scurry back into the safety of his warm den.

Just then, Speedy Jaguar leapt down from a tree, and watched Young Wolf prancing happily along the path. "Ah, good day, Young Wolf," he called out. "And where are you headed on this fine day?"

Young Wolf proudly recounted to Speedy Jaguar all that was in his heart. "Today, Clever Cobra will be defeated. He stands no chance against me," he boldly pronounced.

Speedy Jaguar snickered. "Surely you are deceiving yourself, Young Wolf! Don't you realize the cunning* of Clever Cobra? None of us have ever been able to catch him. Many have tried, and all have failed. Surely you do not wish to end up as they did!"

Young Wolf stood a moment, pondering Speedy Jaguar's words. He rubbed his white paw thoughtfully along his whiskers, and replied, "You may be right, Speedy Jaguar. You have lived many years in this part of the forest and know many things. But today I received a message that assured me of success! Therefore, I am not afraid in the least!"

Speedy Jaguar walked away, laughing. "We shall see, Young Wolf, we shall see!" he snickered, and then disappeared into the green undergrowth.

Young Wolf began to doubt himself for a short moment, but quickly took heart again. "No, I believe the message. I know it is true, for the King of the Forest would never lie! I shall be victorious!" Once again he continued to prance along the winding forest trail.

Soon he encountered the great Flying Eagle, the oldest and wisest bird in the forest, soaring gracefully above the pine trees. Flying Eagle greatly liked Young Wolf, and called down to him, "How goes it, my fine young friend?"

"Very well," Young Wolf howled upward to Flying Eagle. "Today I shall defeat Clever Cobra and make an end of him at last!"

Flying Eagle stared questioningly at Young Wolf as he swooped down next to him. He perched himself on a low-lying branch of an evergreen tree. "Now who ever put that silly idea into your mind?"

Young Wolf explained himself quite carefully, as everyone knew what an educated bird Flying Eagle was. "I have it upon good authority that I shall have complete success this day."

Flying Eagle cawed irritably. "I myself once thought I could catch Clever Cobra when I was a young fledgling. I tried many times with different flying tactics and maneuvers*, but each time Clever Cobra was too quick and slippery for me to get my talons on him. I have tried many times, but every attempt only ended in utter failure! No, Young Wolf, don't even bother trying. You are not wise enough, and shall surely end in utter defeat, as I did so many times!" Flying Eagle's eyes drooped sadly down upon the ground as he recalled how many times he had failed.

"But I believe," Young Wolf said enthusiastically. "I trust the King of the Forest, who has given me His word!"

Flying Eagle flapped his wings furiously, trying to persuade Young Wolf to give up his crazy plan. "I am wiser and more learned than you, Young Wolf. You must trust me concerning these things. Do not attempt this!"

"But I must!" cried Young Wolf, as he stepped forward along the trail again.

Flying Eagle shook his bald head rather disappointedly, spread his great wings, and flew off to his lofty mountain retreat.

As Young Wolf turned the bend in the road, he knew it would only be a matter of moments before he would reach Clever Cobra's deep dark hole in the ground.

Brown Bear was standing in the berry patch, hungrily eating mouthfuls of fresh juicy berries for breakfast. Young Wolf called out cheerily to him, "Yummy berries, Brown Bear?"

"Mmmmmmm!" was all Brown Bear could manage to say, his mouth quite stuffed.

"Today, I shall defeat Clever Cobra and make an end of him!" Young Wolf announced. "I have received full assurance that I shall be successful in a special message from the King of the Forest. He promised that as long as I would trust in Him, I could overcome Clever Cobra! So that is where I am headed right now!"

Brown Bear stopped his chewing and cast his big eyes over at Young Wolf. "Ha! You are too small, Young Wolf, and too young! Clever Cobra will make an end of you very quickly and turn you into a yummy dinner! If the King of the Forest wanted someone to defeat Clever Cobra, He would have asked me! I am big and powerful. My long arms and sharp claws can easily reach down into his den and crush him."

Young Wolf did not know what to say to Brown Bear. "I suppose you could try, if you wish. But the King of the Forest has given me His promise that I shall have good success if I will only trust in Him!"

Brown Bear laughed with a growling roar, "Trust in Him! Why, Young Wolf, you are a fool, too young and much too small. How can you even be sure that the message you received came from the King of the Forest? Why don't you let me take care of it, seeing that I am stronger and bigger than you?"

Young Wolf turned slightly to the side thinking of the message he had received that morning. In his mind, he went over the precious words once again: "... and trust in My promise that surely you shall behold the end of Clever Cobra on this day ..." As he thought on these words, his faith was renewed.

"Thank you for your kind offer, Brown Bear, but I believe I can succeed if only I will try!" With that, he turned to resume his walk down the path.

Young Wolf soon arrived at the mouth of Clever Cobra's deep snake hole. "What should I do now?" Young Wolf questioned.

"Trust in Me!" came the clear ringing reply to his heart.

"I will," Young Wolf resolved, "I WILL!" and he began to walk towards Clever Cobra's hole. He stopped for a moment as he heard the hissing and rasping sounds of Clever Cobra moving around in his dark abode. He swallowed hard and his fur shivered as a wave of fear passed through his little body. He thought of the moment that he would face Clever Cobra, and find himself staring into those hypnotizing eyes. Would he fall for Clever Cobra's trickery like so many others? Would he be charmed and put into a trance by his piercing stare, and fall as his next prey?

"NO! NO!" Young Wolf yelled aloud, "I won't! I will succeed! I have the promise!"

Young Wolf's sudden outburst caught Clever Cobra's instant attention. In a matter of seconds his small beady eyes peered through the opening of the old snake hole, and then his long body slithered out and raised itself in front of Young Wolf.

Young Wolf looked at the big snake in front of him. "Today I have come to defeat you, Clever Cobra, that the forest may be rid of you!" Young Wolf pronounced quite confidently.

Clever Cobra writhed* his thick body and laughed, "Ha-ha! Very funny, you puny little wolf. Don't you know what I can do?"

"Yes," replied Young Wolf. "I know that you have killed many animals here in these woods, and that is why I am going to rid us of you!"

"And how do you intend to do that, little wolf?" Clever Cobra looked over at Young Wolf with disdain*. "Why, there's hardly anything to you at all! What makes you think you can get rid of me? Ha-ha!"

Clever Cobra began to circle around Young Wolf, who stood there quite innocently. Suddenly, Young Wolf had an idea, as he felt the presence of the King of the Forest with him, and he knew exactly what to do.

"Well ..." replied Young Wolf, as he stepped over out of the circle Clever Cobra was forming around him. Clever Cobra was interested to hear what Young Wolf would say, so he circled closer. "... I have received a most interesting message this morning ..." Young Wolf went on, stepping back over the cobra's back. Clever Cobra slithered over his own tail and circled closer, "And what did this message say?"

"The message told me quite surely that I would overcome you!" Young Wolf moved back slightly, stepping through the ring that Clever Cobra's body had formed. Without thinking, Clever Cobra moved his head through the circle of his own long body.

"Ha! That is what you think, you little puffball! No one has ever been able to get me, and no one ever will!" He slithered his ugly face closer to Young Wolf, his tongue hissing and vibrating.

"But I shall," Young Wolf continued boldly. "The great King of the Forest has promised, and I believe Him!"

"The King of the Forest is a fool!" Clever Cobra said slyly*, as he continued following Young Wolf's movements. "And anyone who listens to Him is a fool too!" He gazed deceptively into Young Wolf's eyes, still slithering closer and closer.

Young Wolf answered boldly. "No, He is not a fool! Whatever He has said will surely come to pass!" Young Wolf again walked around Clever Cobra's body and jumped through the coiled* hoop a second time. "I believe in the King!"

Clever Cobra continued to follow Young Wolf around, his head again passing through the ring that his back had formed. He was completely absorbed in the conversation, and his thoughts of soon devouring this helpless little creature. "Ha-ha! You fool! You shall end up like all the rest of them, as my dinner!"

"No, I don't think so!" Young Wolf beamed with faith as he quickly hopped backwards a few steps. "I shall overcome!"

Now Clever Cobra could withhold himself no further. He lunged* towards Young Wolf, aiming to encircle him and take his long-awaited bite. At that, Clever Cobra received a most unpleasant shock. He found that while he had been busy talking with Young Wolf, he had tied himself into a tight knot from which he was not able to escape. Though he tried with all his might, his head could not budge another inch forward, nor could he move himself backwards. He could only flop over and over—which is exactly what he did. He flopped himself all the way to the edge of the deep lake in the middle of the Great Forest, where he disappeared into the dark waters, never to be seen or heard of again.

Moral: It is not how old you are, how experienced you are, how smart you are, or even how big you are that wins the battle. It is how much you believe—in the Words of the King!



- Who gave Young Wolf his courage?
- Who do you think the King represented in this story?
- How can we get the courage to do something that is difficult for us?
- What did Young Wolf do to keep the courage to go on when his friends tried to discourage him?
- Tell about a time you or someone you know needed the courage to do something that was really difficult.
- How would you define courage? Give some examples of ways you can show courage in your life.

***prance:** walk or move about in a spirited manner; strut

***cunning:** deceptive

***maneuver:** a skillful movement

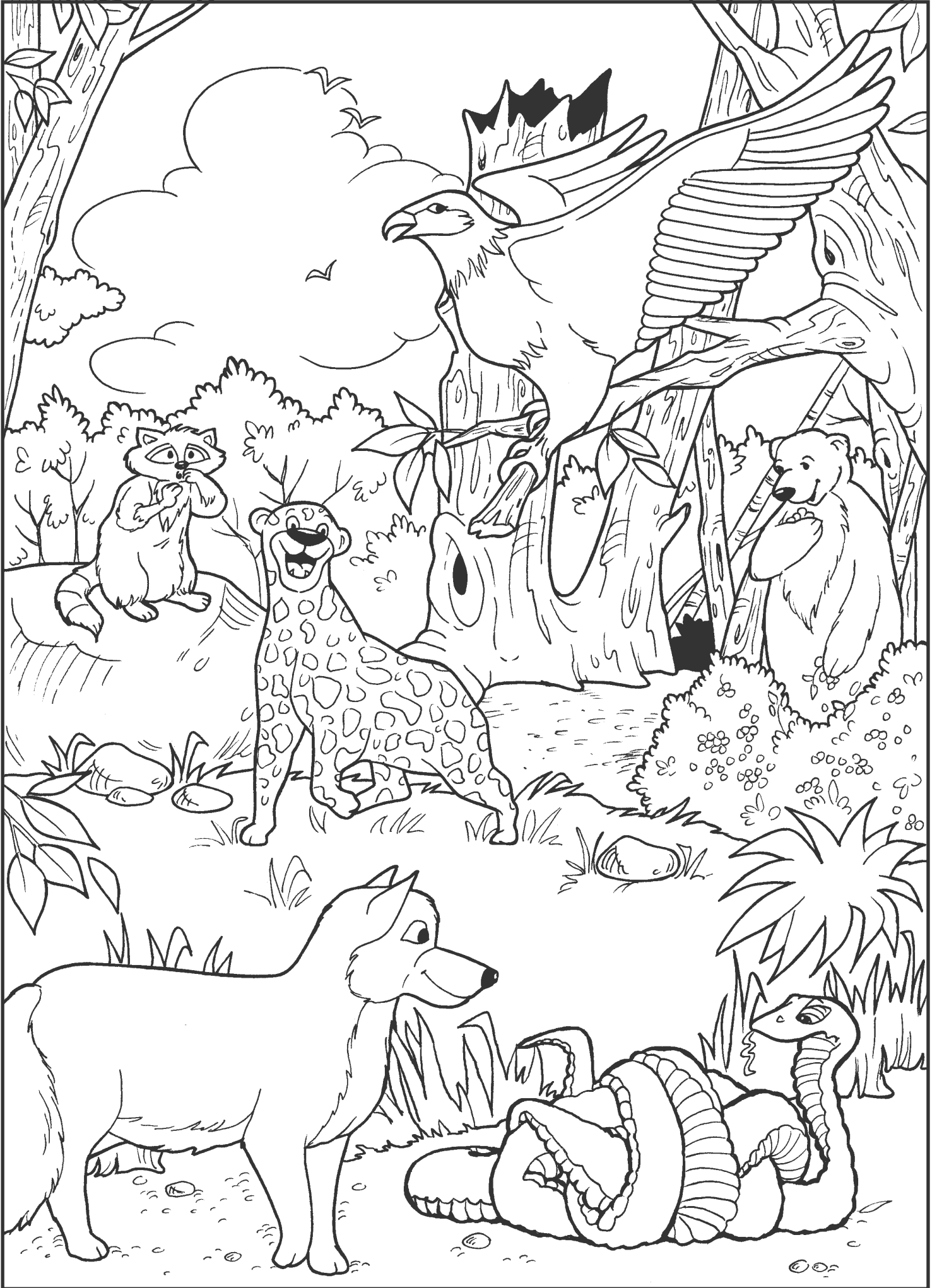
***writhed:** twisted and squirmed

***disdain:** the feeling that someone is beneath oneself

***slyly:** cunningly, mischievously

***coiled:** rolled in a spiral

***lunged:** move quickly forward



He Did It!

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That "Maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing, as he tackled the th
That couldn't be done, and he did it.



Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do t
At least no one ever has done it";
But he took off his coat and he took off h
And the first thing we knew he'd begun
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a gr
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the th
That couldn't be done, and he did it.



There are thousands to tell you it cannot b
There are thousands to prophesy fail;
There are thousands to point out to you on
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the th
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it
—Edgar Guest

Christopher Columbus

“Men of faith climb unscaled walls, and they sail uncharted seas...”

Columbus began to navigate ships when he was 14 and worked as a corsair (a sort of professional pirate that governments would hire). Once when his ship caught fire and burned, he miraculously escaped and swam a great distance to the Portuguese coast, hanging on to a wooden oar. He landed on the shore near Prince Henry the Navigator’s great academy for seamen. Columbus believed that God had saved him to do some great thing.

Portugal was on the western edge of the world. In Columbus’ day most people believed that Portugal lay beyond “the Dark Sea,” supposedly “full of monsters.” It was believed that ships going there would “fall off the edge of the world and be destroyed.” Columbus read many books while in Portugal, especially the Bible and the stories of Marco Polo*. Soon he was convinced that the Earth was round and he wanted to be the one to prove it. All he had was great faith and a vision, but now he needed a king to sponsor him.

The king of Portugal refused him. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain told him that they were too busy with the war against the Moors, so Columbus decided to ask the King of France to give him ships.

On his way, Columbus stopped at a convent to beg for food. There he met a priest who was a friend of Queen Isabella. The footsore traveler told his story to the priest and the priest said, “I will send a letter to the Queen!”

The Queen sent a messenger to Columbus with word for him to return to court. Before long, he signed an agreement with the Spanish monarchs*. The agreement stated that he was to be called “Admiral of the Ocean,” and was to receive one-tenth of the money he made from the lands which he might discover.

He set sail on August 3, 1492, across the Atlantic Ocean, thinking the journey would be quite short. However, days turned to weeks and weeks turned into months with still no sight of land. The men were fearful. Several times low-lying clouds were mistaken for land. Sometimes Columbus led his ships through dangerous waters by going ahead of his ships in a rowing boat! Day after day no land appeared, and again and again his sailors tried to persuade him to turn back. Columbus refused to listen to them and entered each day in the ship’s log-book the two words, “Sailed on.” (See Exodus 14.15; Numbers 13.30; Luke 9.62.)

Then on the evening of October 11, 1492, Columbus was looking ahead and suddenly cried, “Look! Is that a light?” Others could not see it, but all night they heard birds passing overhead. At 2 a.m. a sailor caught sight of land. Could the sight of land ever have been more welcome to the eyes of men?

At sunrise, Columbus stepped into a small boat, and sailors rowed him to shore. The moment must have been one of the greatest in his life. When he reached the solid ground, Columbus shouted that the land would belong to the King and Queen of Spain.

Columbus had the courage to “sail on” even when all seemed to go wrong and all seemed to be against him. His faith and courage were rewarded by his discovery of the land which is now called America.

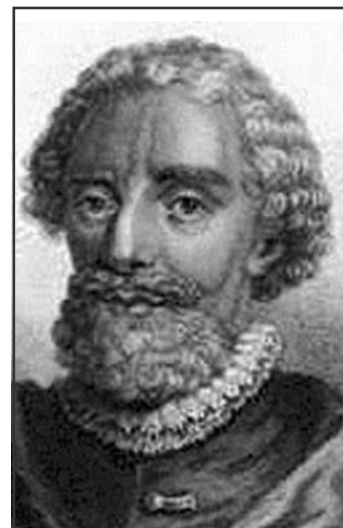
The things that haven't been done before,
 Those are the things to try;
 Columbus dreamed of an unknown shore
 At the rim of the far-flung sky,
 And his heart was bold and his faith was strong
 As he ventured in dangers new,
 And he paid no heed to the jeering throng*
 Or the fears of the doubting crew.

Many will follow the beaten track
 With guideposts on the way,
 They live and have lived for ages back
 With a chart for every day.
 Someone has told them it's safe to go
 On the road he has traveled over,
 And all that they ever strive to know
 Are the things that were known before.

A few strike out, without map or chart,
 Where never a man has been,
 From the beaten paths they draw apart
 To see what no man has seen.
 There are deeds they hunger alone to do;
 Though battered and bruised and sore,
 They create the path for the many, who
 Do nothing not done before.

The things that haven't been done before
 Are the tasks worthwhile today;
 Are you one of the flock that follows, or
 Are you one that shall lead the way?
 Are you one of the timid* souls that quail*
 At the jeers of a doubting crew?
 Or dare you, whether you win or fail,
 Strike out for a goal that's new?

—Author Unknown



Christopher Columbus

1451-1506

Italian explorer in the service of Spain who determined that the earth was round and attempted to reach Asia by sailing west from Europe, thereby discovering America instead (1492). He made three subsequent voyages to the Caribbean in his quest to find a sea route to China.



- Was Columbus afraid to do something no one else had done before? Why or why not?
- Talk about what courage means to you. How did Columbus show courage?
- What goals in life are you striving for? Do you need courage to attain them?
- Do you have the courage to do things that are difficult? Where does this courage come from?
- Talk about what might have happened if Columbus had given up and turned around and listened to his men. Have you ever had to stick with something even though you thought it seemed impossible? Talk about it.

***Marco Polo:** Italian traveler who explored Asia from 1271 to 1295

***monarch:** one who reigns over a state or territory

***jeering throng:** a crowd of people making fun of someone or something

***timid:** lacking self-confidence; shy

***quail:** shrink back in fear; cower



Bamboo

Once upon a time in the heart of the Eastern Kingdom lay a beautiful garden. Every day during the cool of the day, the Master would walk around and admire each plant and creature in his lovely garden. Of all the plants of the garden, the most beautiful and beloved was the gracious* and noble Bamboo.

Year after year Bamboo grew more beautiful and gracious. Every day the Master of the garden would come to Bamboo and check how tall he had grown. He was diligent to make sure that Bamboo was getting the right amount of water and sunshine. Bamboo felt great love and concern from the Master and so loved to please Him.

Often when Wind came to dance through the garden, Bamboo would throw aside his dignity. He would dance and sway merrily along with her, tossing, leaping, and bowing in joy. He would lead the great dance of the garden for he knew this greatly delighted his Master's heart.

One day the Master came near to examine His Bamboo. With eyes of curious expectancy, Bamboo bowed his great head to the ground in loving greeting.

"My dear loving Master, thanks to Your care I have grown greatly. My branches almost touch the clouds."

The Master spoke: "This is good. It is now time, Bamboo, for Me to use you."

Bamboo said, "Master, I am ready. Use me as You want."

"Bamboo," the Master's voice was soft and sad, "I must take you and cut you down." A trembling of great horror shook Bamboo.

"Cut ... me ... down? Me, whom You, Master, have made the most beautiful in all of Your garden? Ah, not that! Not that! Use me for Your joy, O Master, but cut me not down!"

"Beloved Bamboo," the Master's voice grew sadder still, "if I do not cut you down, then I cannot use you."

The garden grew still. Wind held his breath. Bamboo slowly bent his proud and glorious head. There came a whisper. Bamboo replied, "Master, if You cannot use me unless You cut me down, then do Your will and cut."

"Bamboo, beloved Bamboo, I would cut your leaves and branches from you also."

"Master, Master, spare me! Cut me down and lay my beauty in the dust, but would You take from me my leaves and branches also?"

"Bamboo, alas, if I do not cut them away, I cannot use you." The Sun hid his face. A listening butterfly fluttered fearfully away.

Bamboo shivered in terrible expectancy, whispering low, "Master, cut away."

"Bamboo, Bamboo, I would divide you in two, for if I do not cut so, I cannot use you."

"Master, Master, then cut and divide."

So the Master of the garden took Bamboo and cut him down and stripped off his leaves and branches and divided him in two. Lifting him gently, He carried him to where there was a spring of fresh, sparkling water in the midst of Master's dry fields.

Then putting down one end of Bamboo in the spring, and the other end into the water channel in his field, the Master laid down gently His beloved Bamboo. The spring sang for joy as its clear sparkling water raced down the channel of Bamboo's torn body into the waiting fields.

Then the rice was planted and the days went by. The shoots grew. The harvest came.

The Master of the Garden called all of His creatures and plants and spoke to them, "Behold, Bamboo, once so glorious in his beauty, had the courage to be cut down in order to become a channel of the water of life to the whole garden!"

All of the creatures, plants and trees in the Master's garden bowed their heads and prayed that they could have as great courage as Bamboo to yield to the Master's will. They hoped that they would be willing to lay down their lives for others as Bamboo had.



- Was it hard for Bamboo to be cut down in order to do the Master's will? What did it take?
- Was Bamboo happy afterward that he had followed his Master's plan even though it seemed hard at first? How did many people benefit from Bamboo's courage?
- What would have happened if he hadn't let himself be used to help others?
- Do you have the courage to do what God asks you to do? God may ask you to do big things or small things. For example, maybe God has asked you to speak a kind word to a sad friend or tell someone about His love. Would you have the courage to do so, even though you may be shy? Talk about some things God may ask you to do that would take courage.
- Just like Bamboo, God has a plan for each of our lives, and we must have courage and faith to be willing to do what He asks.

***gracious:** kind and courteous



Prayer and Praise

Dear Jesus, please give me courage! When something is difficult for me, help me not to give up and say, "I can't," but to ask for Your help, and say, "I will! I must!" Thank You for always helping me, You're such a good Father and Friend. Amen.

Memory Fun



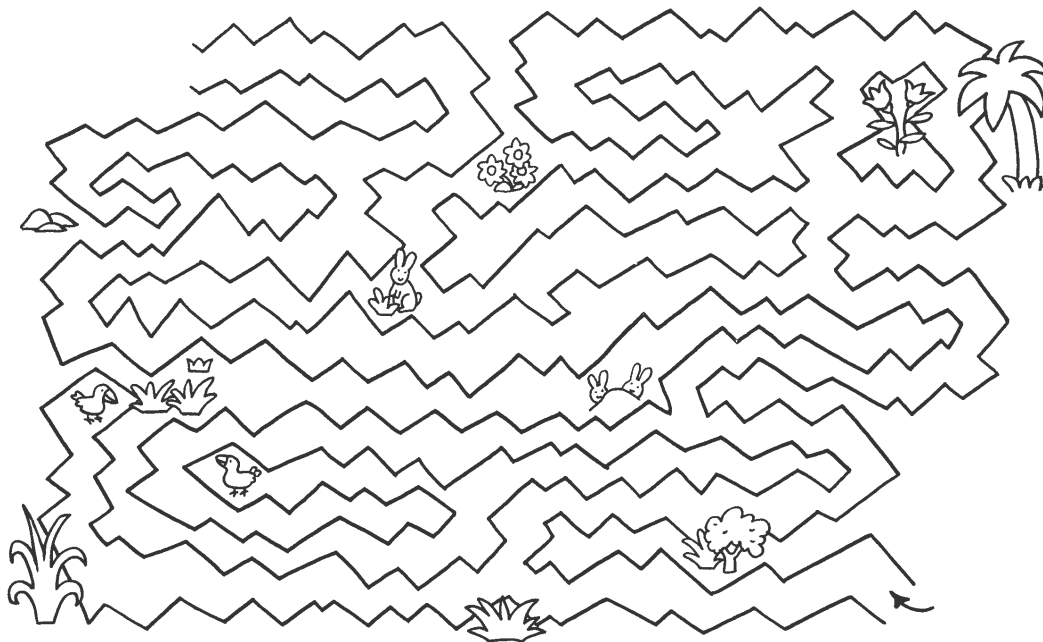
Be strong and of good courage, fear not: for the Lord your God He is the one who goes with you; He will not leave you, nor forsake you.

Deuteronomy 31:6

Pencil Page

Courageous Bamboo

Help the master find his courageous Bamboo.



Fill in the blanks with the underlined letters to find out what will give you courage.

b o t p s t h u e f

u w m g l o n h

p r k w d o s t b

What Is Courage?

Find out what courage is by reading the words below.

Each of these words are in the crossword puzzle below, can you circle them?

You can go vertically, horizontally or diagonally.



fight
bravery
boldness
fearlessness

guts
gumption
spunk
spirit
strength
valor
firmness
faith
stand
unbeatable
power
might
courage

S	A	S	V	G	O	P	B	C	A	N	T	H	T
T	F	I	G	H	T	T	O	S	T	A	N	D	P
R	A	E	T	W	I	N	L	S	E	I	N	C	O
E	I	T	A	B	D	P	D	A	O	E	K	W	S
N	T	G	O	R	W	O	N	R	R	N	Y	O	T
G	H	E	O	A	L	W	E	T	U	O	C	K	R
T	R	L	U	V	B	E	S	P	I	R	I	T	O
H	A	N	U	E	E	R	S	L	S	A	I	F	N
V	A	M	S	R	M	A	L	S	L	B	G	Y	G
H	E	I	P	Y	L	E	M	N	N	O	U	C	H
A	B	G	U	M	P	T	I	O	N	E	T	W	O
M	V	H	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	N	S	M	L
C	L	T	S	F	F	I	R	M	N	E	S	S	W
U	N	B	E	A	T	A	B	L	E	M	A	T	E

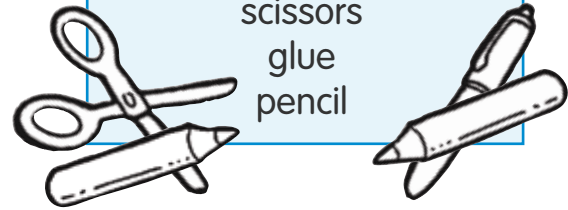
Make and Do

My Courage Kit

We're going to make "Courage Kits" to help us have courage when we run into difficult situations.

You will need:

envelope
paper or cardstock
ribbon or strong string
scissors
glue
pencil



How to:

- Get an envelope, (or make one of your own using a sheet of paper and taping the sides together, leaving a flap on one side, like a regular envelope).
- You will need a ribbon (or a piece of strong string) that is about one and a half times the measurement of your waist.
- Cut out the verses below and glue them to cut out pieces of cardstock. You can look up some more verses in the Bible and add them to your cards.
- Put the cards in your envelope.
- Fold the flap of the envelope backwards. Glue the flap down and thread the ribbon or string through it. Now, tie the envelope around your waist.
- Wear your courage kit and read the passages whenever you need a little courage and encouragement to remind you that God is on your side!

2 Chronicles 15:7

Be strong and do not let your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded!

2 Corinthians 12:9

He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.

Exodus 14:14

The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.

1 Timothy 6:12

Fight the good fight of faith.

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me.

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From Jesus—with Love



I see you, My little love, when you're faced with things that are difficult to do. But don't feel sad and blue—just ask Me for My help.

I can give you all the courage you need! It takes courage to be brave and do things you've never done before. Maybe you're learning to ride a bicycle and you're afraid that if you try, everyone will laugh at you. But don't give up. Just ask Me for the courage to try and to keep on trying no matter what, until you succeed. This is courage!

Or maybe I ask you to go and speak a kind word to a friend or tell someone of My love, but you're very shy. That's another time when you can ask Me to give you the courage to do what I need you to do. And after you do it, you'll feel so happy inside that you were brave enough to go ahead and do something that was difficult for you.

All these things that you experience in life will make you into the big strong grownup that I need you to be. So have courage, My child. Don't say, "I can't," but say, "I will! I must!" I know you can do it, because I can do it through you. I will give you the courage you need to be all that I want you to be. I'm so proud of you! You are so brave!



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