

# Growing in God's Love

A Story Bible Curriculum

## Brave Women and Men in the Old Testament





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The free At-Home Kit Guide provides instructions and suggestions for at-home faith formation. Download it at [www.pcusastore.com/StoryBibleCurriculum](http://www.pcusastore.com/StoryBibleCurriculum) or [www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/StoryBibleCurriculum](http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/StoryBibleCurriculum). Click on the unit title, and then click on the download button found at the bottom of the product page for this unit.

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**Goal:** To learn ways to be courageous and help others have courage.

### Connecting with the Biblical Text

The acts of courage by mother and daughter as told in “I Used All My Courage” are set in a tale of deceit and intrigue during the reign of King David. Rape, incest, spying, and murder all enter into this tale, which seems far removed from the values of the Bible and God’s people. Or at least it does until we remember all the stories of deceit and murder prior to King David.

The incident in this story can be traced back to David’s son Amnon’s rape of Tamar, Absalom’s sister. Just to make it more confusing, Absalom is also David’s son. Absalom kills Amnon, and David is so angry that he expels Absalom from Jerusalem. When he was allowed to return, he was not permitted to stand before the king, his father. After he was finally allowed to see his father face-to-face, Absalom began to plot to overthrow the king. When King David was told of this plot, he fled from Jerusalem, the capital city.

It is during this time that the courageous mother and daughter enter the story. The text is short on details about them, but young women were commonly sent to the well for water, so women coming and going would not have been noticed. In a town where loyalties were divided between Absalom and David, their courage and cunning is remarkable. For the fuller story, read 2 Samuel 13–18.

### Connecting with the World

Courage is important in many different situations and ways. Here are a couple of examples:

- Malala Yousafzai was a young girl in Pakistan who knew she had to have courage to pursue an education. Her story has been told in many places. Read a brief story at [bit.ly/MalalaCourage](http://bit.ly/MalalaCourage).

- What acts of courage, large and small, have you seen in your community? How have they inspired you?

### Connecting with the Spiritual Lives of Children

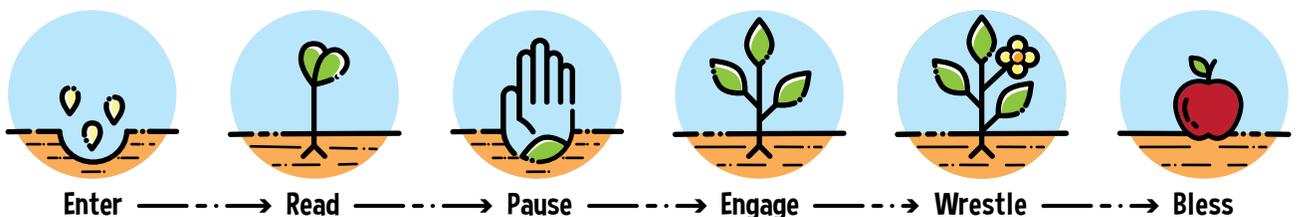
Children are often told to be brave or to have courage when facing a frightening event, such as getting a shot, or a new situation, such as going to a new school. While not as dramatic as the courage needed by the mother and daughter in the Bible story, children today need support to find their courage. Many situations, especially as children grow older, must be faced on their own, without a significant adult in the wings. Their spiritual lives can bolster their courage if they are assured that God is with them. The breath prayer is one way that children can call on that assurance at any time. Teaching a child this silent prayer gives them a tool of their own. A simple form is to breath in and think, “No matter where I am,” and then breathe out and think, “God is with me.” The attention to breathing and the words of assurance calm their fears.

### Connecting with the Spiritual Lives of Adults

The story of the courageous girl and mother reminds us that sometimes we choose to be brave and sometimes situations confront us that require an immediate response. The young girl summoned her courage to do a brave deed. The mother’s quick thinking was most likely a response to a life led making just decisions. When a situation presented itself, she knew the right thing to do.

- When have you had to summon extra courage to accomplish something? How did your faith support you?

*God of strength and courage, attune us to your presence, especially in those times when we feel alone and afraid. Amen.*



## Gathering Supplies

Based on your choices, you will need:

- ✓ *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*
- ✓ Mural paper
- ✓ Battery-operated candle
- ✓ Story items: objects or pictures that represent courage, such as a lion, medals, or cultural symbols for courage
- ✓ Play dough
- ✓ Smartphone or camera and printer (optional)
- ✓ Internet-connected device
- ✓ One or more of the books about courage found on Resource Page 1, or those of your own choosing

## Preparing to Lead

In the midst of a drama befitting a soap opera is this small but daring story of a daughter and mother with spying, fast-paced action, quick thinking, concealment, and escape. The context of these five verses, however, is placed within five chapters of 2 Samuel:13–18. If you aren't familiar with the sordid tale of several of David's sons and daughter and the eventual plot to oust him as king, read those chapters. The saga contains material that is inappropriate for young audiences, and it is a much longer tale than needs to be shared to understand the story of a brave child and mother. Suffice it to say that today's story comes after a long line of anger and deceit in David's family tree. A mother and young daughter are caught up in the middle of David's family drama, risking their own lives. They hide spies and feed them information, even when they know they could get into trouble. Think about a time when you have been faced with a situation where you may have been at risk—physically, financially, emotionally—for helping someone. Did you weigh the pros and cons or act with some immediacy? How did this situation make you feel? How was your faith a factor in your action? Consider who today might be in this type of situation.

Begin your preparation by reading the passage from 2 Samuel 17:17–21.

- ✓ How might you see yourself in this story?
- ✓ How do you imagine you will share this story with the children?

Read the story "I Used All My Courage" from *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* (p. 82).

- ✓ How are the divisions that the community in this story face similar to divisions in communities today?
- ✓ In what ways do families get caught up in these types of divisions today?

Pray for the children who will be in your group. Some of them might be in situations where division is present in their lives and they need courage to navigate these difficult situations.

Set up a small table or space in the room to display the story items and a candle. Cover the tables with mural paper for children to draw, color, or doodle on throughout the session. Set out various art supplies, such as crayons, markers, colored pencils, and pastels, for drawing.



**Enter into sacred space together.**

Ask everyone to share their name and their favorite game to play. This will help anyone who is new to hear names and maybe find someone they have something in common with!

Gather the children where you have set up the story items and candle. Turn on the candle. Tell the children that a candle may represent God's light in the darkness or God's presence with us. Invite the children to pray, repeating after you:

God of courage, /  
help us to be brave /  
and to have courage /  
when things are hard. /  
Amen. /

Draw the children's attention to the drawing supplies. Encourage them to write, draw, or doodle throughout the session.

## Leading



### Read a story of God's people.

Ask the children what they think it means to be brave or have courage. Point out the objects or pictures you have that are symbols of courage. Wonder why they might be related to courage. Invite the children to share a time when they have been brave. Tell them that they will hear a story in the Bible about a girl and her mother who had to be very brave.

Read the story "I Used All My Courage" (p. 82) from *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*.

Invite the children to draw something they hear from the story on the paper covering the tables as you read the story again.

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Have children who like to read aloud take turns reading the story paragraph by paragraph to the other children.

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Invite volunteers to act out the story during the second reading to children who prefer to watch a dramatization.

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### Pause to let God's Word enter into hearts and minds.

Give the children a few minutes to continue drawing or invite them to draw an image from the story if the children acted out the story during the second reading.

Invite the children to share what they drew from the story.



### Engage curiosity and imagination with God's story.

Encourage the children to wonder aloud. Use the following questions to prompt conversation:

- ✦ Why did the little girl need courage in this story?
- ✦ Where do they think she got her courage from?
- ✦ Why do you think the girl and her mother decided to help the king's men?
- ✦ What would you have done in this situation?
- ✦ How did God help the girl and give her courage?

### Statues of Courage

- ✦ Wonder together about statues of people who have been brave and shown great courage. Invite the children to share any examples of statues that they have seen.
- ✦ Give the children play dough and have them create a statue of one or more of the characters in the story who were brave. As they work, engage them in conversation using the following questions.
  - Who are the people in their statues?
  - How are their statues showing the person's courage?
  - Where does that person's courage come from?

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See "Grow with More" for more storybook suggestions. Read a story or have the children read stories to one another in small groups. Then have the children create a play dough statue of one or more of the characters in the story who was brave. Use the same questions as above for conversation.

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### Wrestle with our place in God's story.

Ask the children to imagine themselves within the story.

- ✦ Who would they want to be in this story: one of King David's soldiers, one of Absalom's soldiers, the child, or the parent?
- ✦ What do you like about that character?
- ✦ When has been a time you have had to be brave?
- ✦ How did you feel before and after the situation?
- ✦ How is God with us when we need courage?

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Have the children pose like a statue of themselves being brave and courageous. Take pictures, print them, and give them to the children to label with the word *brave* or *courageous*.

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Choose one or both options:

### Malala's Courage

- ✦ Watch the YouTube video "Malala Yousafzai, Activist / Biography," at [bit.ly/BraveMalala](https://bit.ly/BraveMalala) (3:17). After watching the video, engage the children in conversation about Malala using the following questions.
  - Who is Malala Yousafzai?
  - How was she brave?

## Leading

- Who else in her family was brave, and how was that person also brave?
- How do you think Malala had the courage to do what she did?
- What role do you think Malala's faith played in her courage?

### ○ Courage Looks Like . . .

- ✦ Invite the children to use the drawing supplies and paper on the table to draw their responses to the following prompts first and then share their thoughts. Encourage them to keep adding to their picture with each additional question. Comment that their drawings may just be colors and shapes, it may include words, or it may have pictures; there are no right or wrong ways to draw courage.
  - What color is courage?
  - What does courage feel like?
  - How do you know when you have courage?
  - How do you get courage?
  - What kind of courage do we get from God?



### **Bless one another with God's grace.**

Have the children take the mural paper off the table and display it on a wall or somewhere everyone can view it together. Suggest that they stand back to take in the entirety of the mural paper. Wonder together what predominant colors are expressed. Ask the children what overall feelings they sense from the drawings. Invite the children to name specific images they see and how those pictures make them think of courage.

Thank the children for their courage while talking about the story and thinking about how God gives each of us courage. Close using a breath prayer. Stand in a circle and ask the children to take three deep breaths, in and out. As they breathe in, say, "No matter where I am," and as they breathe out, say, "God is with me." Then invite the children to do this again silently. Send the children by saying, "God is as close as your breath, always with you to give you courage."



### **Grow with more.**

### ○ Stories of Courage

- ✦ Display the books you have gathered about courage from Resource Page 1, or put out those of your own choosing. Invite the children to form groups of two or three children with at least one child who likes to read aloud in each group, or read one or two books to the whole group. Have a conversation with the children about the storybooks using the following questions:
  - How did the characters in the stories have courage like the little girl from the story?
  - What gave them their courage?
  - When are times when you need courage like the character in the story?

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[A list of chapter books is included for children who would like to explore more about children who have had to be brave. Provide books for children to borrow or a copy of Resource Page 1 to send home.](#)

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**I Used All My Courage**  
**Resource Page 1**

**Picture Books about Courage**

- ✦ *Before She Was Harriet* by Lesa Cline-Ransome (Holiday House Publishing, 2017)
- ✦ *The Boy and the Whale* by Mordecai Gerstein (Roaring Book Press, 2017)
- ✦ *The Bravest of Us All* by Marsha Diane Arnold (Dial Publishing, 2000)
- ✦ *Courage* by Bernard Waber (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2002)
- ✦ *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* by Margarita Engle (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2015)
- ✦ *Let the Children March* by Monica Clark-Robinson (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018)
- ✦ *Malala's Magic Pencil* by Malala Yousafzai (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2017)
- ✦ *Peep! A Little Book about Taking a Leap* by Maria van Lieshout (Feiwel & Friends, 2009)
- ✦ *The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet!* by Carmen Agra Deedy (Scholastic Press, 2017)
- ✦ *Ron's Big Mission* by Rose Blue (Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2009)

**Chapter Books about Courage**

- ✦ *The Boy Who Dared* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (Scholastic Press, 2018)
- ✦ *Fire from the Rock* by Sharon M. Draper (Speak Publisher, 2008)
- ✦ *A Girl Named Disaster* by Nancy Farmer (Scholastic Paperbacks, 2012)
- ✦ *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2006)
- ✦ *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* by Gary D. Schmidt (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2013)
- ✦ *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2011)
- ✦ *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2011)
- ✦ *True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by Avi (Scholastic Paperbacks, 2015)
- ✦ *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech (HarperCollins, 2011)

