

WINTER
2012

Families

WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

STORY FOR ALL AGES

The Farmer on the Hill



**Courage!
Look in
Your Heart**

No one knew why the farmer was so ornery. He never had a kind word to say. No one knew why he was so inhospitable, never opening his door to visitors.

No one knew why he lived isolated, at the top of a craggy hill, though it was rumored he had moved there after the death of his young son. They knew one thing: He wanted to be left alone.

And so he was.

It was time for the festival. All the village was there—except for the farmer on the hill. The women sang, the men told tall tales, and the children played, screaming at the top of their lungs as they ripped and ran, trailing long streamers behind them.

At the top of the hill, the farmer wondered, “What is all the commotion?” Looking down, he saw the village. But it was not the bright festivities that took his breath away. Beyond, he saw the nearby sea, where a huge wave was rolling toward shore with tremendous speed. Though he had never seen one, he knew what this was: a tsunami, heading straight for the village.

The farmer yelled out a warning. He jumped up and down and waved his arms. But because of the festivities, no one could hear him. No one looked up the hill.

The farmer was frantic. How could he stop the tsunami from drowning the entire village?

Suddenly, he knew. Though the villagers knew he preferred to be left alone, they had always shown him kindness. He hoped they would do so now. With no concern for himself, he rushed into his fields and lit all his crops afire. The dry vegetation crumbled in the raging flames.

Who saw the flames first? Perhaps a bright-eyed child, or an elder with a nose for smoke. The cry of “Fire!” spread quickly and all the festivities stopped as the villagers’ eyes turned toward the hill.

“Hurry! Get buckets of water! We have to save the farmer and his land!”

And all the villagers rushed up the hill—with buckets, with blankets, and with no concern for themselves.

They reached the top and doused the last of the flames. By then, all the farmer’s crops were destroyed. Yet no one from the village drowned in the tsunami. And they all knew why.

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The Family pages are adapted from Tapestry of Faith lifespan faith development programs.

www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith

A wisdom tale from Japan in the Tapestry of Faith program, Virtue Ethics.

“Courage” makes us think of public heroes. Yet courage is a quality each of us has inside, and every day brings opportunities to use it.

Read the story “The Farmer on the Hill” together.
Who showed courage? How?



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Find Your Courage... and Someone Else's, Too

Courage comes from the French word, “*coeur*,” which means heart. You may learn a bit about how to find your own courage by talking to other people who found courage in their hearts to do what they felt was right. Make or buy some heart stickers. Use them to thank an adult or a young person for sharing their story of courage with you.

ASK SOMEONE...

- ☐ When was a time you found the courage to do something difficult that you felt was important to do?
- ☐ Why was the action difficult? What was hard about it? What was the risk?
- ☐ Where did you find the courage to do it?
- ☐ How did you feel afterward?
- ☐ Find a partner to exchange stories of courage with. Tell about something courageous you have done, and why you did it. Hear a story of theirs.



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We Can All Be David

In an ancient biblical story, David is a youth who volunteers to battle a much larger, adult foe—Goliath—to help defend his community. Sometimes in our lives we can feel like a David when we face a modern-day Goliath, such as a bully, a hard assignment at school or work, or a very large evil, like pollution or war. Today, a slingshot such as David used wouldn't be a useful tool for expressing our courage. Yet we can find wisdom in David's story. What do we need to confront a powerful foe?

Celebrate acts of courage in your own life or in your community. You might look for David and Goliath-type stories in the news or in fiction. You might also name your own acts of courage by writing of them in your journal.

Talk about the Goliaths in your lives. Act out a modern day “David and Goliath” drama, at home or in your congregation. Maybe you'll inspire someone else who is looking for some courage of their own.



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Five Smooth Stones

The Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams wrote about five ideas from our religious beliefs that gave him courage to act when action was needed. He called these ideas “five smooth stones.”

Decorate five smooth stones to remind yourself why to be courageous and that you can do it. Find small, flat stones or buy some at a craft store. Set up a work table with permanent markers in a variety of colors. Paint or draw the sources of your courage, in words or pictures, on five smooth stones.



Everyday Courage

Have you done any of these courageous acts? Which others could you try?

Adapted from the Lion's Whiskers website.

- ✿ have a personal style and stick to it, regardless of fashion trends
- ✿ perform in a play or concert
- ✿ give an oral report with confidence
- ✿ invite the kid who often gets left out to your birthday party
- ✿ volunteer as a mentor or youth group leader
- ✿ keep your word
- ✿ step away from a clique that has become unhealthy
- ✿ shake hands and introduce yourself
- ✿ allow others to shine, succeed, win, and even be right!
- ✿ help host a family party
- ✿ run for class/school/public office
- ✿ apologize
- ✿ organize a charity event

You must do the thing you think you cannot do.

— Eleanor Roosevelt



What would you need if you had to confront something or someone you were afraid of? What gives you courage? Look inside yourself! Some sources might be: your faith, a person you admire for acting on their beliefs, or feelings of love or protection toward your family.

Standing Up for Justice

Match the courageous person with the action they took.

— **Tim DeChristopher**

— **Clara Barton**

— **Ruby Bridges**

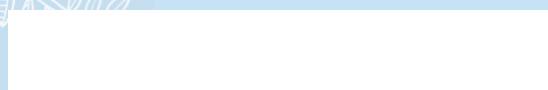
— **Juliette Hampton Morgan**

— **Jackie Robinson**

— **Ellery Schempp**

— **Aung San Suu Kyi**

— **Zach Wahls**



[Your Name Here!]

1 as a child, walked past armed protesters to become the first, and only, black student at a new school.

2 endured house arrest in Burma while working to bring democracy to her nation's government.

3 tried to stop the use of land for fossil fuel production in Utah, risking ten years in jail.

4 read from the Qur'an in homeroom and sued the school district to protest mandatory Bible reading.

6 joined the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team as Major League Baseball's first black player in 1947.

8 spoke publicly about being raised by two moms, to fight for equal marriage in the family's state, Iowa.

5 traveled to U.S. Civil War battlefields to bring medical care and supplies to wounded soldiers.

7 risked rejection by wealthy, white community in the U.S. South to speak out as an ally to blacks seeking equal rights.

your courageous act here!

Find and Share the Courage of Your Convictions

Convictions are the beliefs and ideas you feel are so important that you are willing to stand up for them—even when taking action might bring great inconvenience, ridicule, or even harm. What are your convictions? What pushes your buttons of “right” or



“wrong”? What would you, or do you, stand up for, even though it might be dangerous or inconvenient?

You can help your child develop courage by understanding and demonstrating yours. Reflect on your courage, and the convictions that drive it. Take some time with these questions:

What beliefs do you hold strongly? Which would you call your convictions? Which would you be willing to stand up for—even, perhaps, at your own peril?

How have you come to decide what convictions are most important to you?

When in your life have you felt called to take a courageous stand or to be courageous? Are there moments in your life when you wish you could have been more courageous?

What resources for courage do you find inside yourself? What resources come from your community of family and friends?

How can you share with your child the strength your resources give you? How can you help your child understand your convictions and discover their own?

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Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.

— Harriet Tubman

FAMILIES: WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

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FIND OUT MORE

■ *The Lion King*, the movie or the musical, lifts up the challenge and rewards of courage.

■ A parenting coach and a children’s book author pack the *Lion’s Whiskers* website with stories, blogs, academic research, and more to help parents nurture courage in their children and themselves. www.lionswhiskers.com

■ The Giraffe Heroes Project honors people who have the courage to stick their necks out for the common good. Read about everyday heroes of all ages, from around the world, and explore ways to “enCourage” children. www.giraffe.org

■ Look into service projects of your congregation, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, or the UUA. A refugee assistance project, a mission trip to an area devastated by natural disaster, and volunteer work with homeless families are some ways to support people whose daily lives demand courage.

■ Items in these pages come from Tapestry of Faith curricula, including *Virtue Ethics* (high school), *Ethics* (adults), *Toolbox of Faith* (grades 4/5), and *Moral Tales* (grades 2/3). Do a keyword search for “courage” on the Tapestry of Faith website for more activities, stories, and reflections to use at home.

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