Overview of the Virtue of Courage

- Courage also known as bravery, fortitude, will, and intrepidity, is the ability to confront fear, pain, risk/danger, uncertainty, or intimidation.
- "Physical courage" is courage in the face of physical pain, hardship, death, or threat of death.
- "Moral courage" is the ability to act rightly in the face of popular opposition, shame, scandal, or discouragement.
- The virtue of courage helps us to take the initiative to make changes in our lives and/or to accept changes brought before us.

Catholic Graduate Expectation -- I HAVE IDEAS!

A Reflective and Creative Thinker Who:

- Recognizes there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges. OSCSG 3(a)
- Creates, adapts, and evaluates new ideas in light of the common good. OSCSG 3(b)
- Thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems. OSCSG 3(c)
- Makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience. OSCSG 3(d)
- Adopts a holistic approach to life by integrating learning from various subject areas and experience. OSCSG 3(e)
- Examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems (physical, political, ethical, socio-economic and ecological) for the development of a just and compassionate society. OSCSG 3(f)

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching - SOLIDARITY:

Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences. Solidarity means that “loving our neighbor” has global dimensions in an interdependent world.
SCRIPTURE PASSAGES AND DISCUSSION STARTERS

COURAGE

I HAVE IDEAS

“Recognizes that there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges”. OCSGE 3(a)

SOLIDARITY

Faith – Scripture Passages:

- In an age which seems more fearful of the future, we are directed to give an account of the hope that is within us. (1 Peter 3:15)
- Do not be afraid, for I am with you. (Isaiah 41:10)
- He gives power to the weak. He increases the strength of him who has no might. (Isaiah 40:29)
- Yahweh is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? Yahweh is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalms 27:1)
- Don’t you be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you. Yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isaiah 41:10)

Discussion Starters

- Share the story of an experience of courage, one that allowed you to feel like a different person.
- Do we turn a blind eye to accepted practices within society?
- How do we speak up and stand as Catholics of integrity to help make a difference? How can we use the Internet to promote Catholic values?
- Project yourself 10 years into the future and pretend you are a guest speaker at your high school graduation ceremony. Write a speech which includes the following: Describe how God’s love and abundance has touched your life since high school.
  - A personal story about yourself
  - Describe how God’s grace has blessed you throughout your life since high school.
  - A description of a time when you stopped and thought clearly about your choices and actively selected good over sin.
  - Describe how with the help of your faith, you were able to turn a difficult time into something positive.
**The Labourers in the Vineyard**

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last.

(Matthew 20: 1-16)

**Describe a time when the values of your faith conflicted with the dominant values of the culture? How did you show courage?**

**How did others respond to the manner in which you addressed the situation?**

**What do school communities “grumble” about? In what respects were their faith responses to such situations?**
I HAVE IDEAS

“Recognizes that there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges”. OCSGE 3(a)

SOLIDARITY

The following Catholic Schools are among some which have received Speak Up Grants from the Ministry of Education. These Catholic Schools from around the province illustrated “Faith in Action” in their schools through various clubs and activities. May they serve to spark inspiration and innovation in your school, as your Catholic Community lives out the call “to give an account of the hope that is within us in an age which seems more fearful of the future”. (1 Peter 3:15)

• **Title:** Student Workshops: It Takes Courage to Speak Up

  **REFLECTION ON ACTIVITY:** What barriers stand in your way when you are faced with speaking up against an injustice? In what ways can school communities promote a safer environment so that students may speak up against injustice and inequality?

  **Description:** A group of 10 students who attended Student Voice leadership courses at the Ontario Education Leadership Centre came back to school excited and enthusiastic about passing on what they had learned to their fellow students. They developed four workshops and invited others to participate. The workshop themes of “Group Dynamics”, “Who has the power?”, “Face to Face” and “Social Justice” drew a new audience of 34 students. The Ontario Student Voice philosophy was discussed and students were invited to join future Student Voice meetings and participate in a variety of school events. In this way, a larger group of students discovered that they have a voice and can have an important influence on the school’s culture.

  **Project Type:** Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated  
  **Grade(s) Impacted:** 10, 11  
  **School Name:** St. Thomas Aquinas SS  
  **School Board:** Dufferin-Peel CDSB
**Title: Students Leading Change from within**

**REFLECTION ON ACTIVITY:** In Scripture, the earth and creation are created first, and then humans. It takes courage to insist of others and ourselves that we respect all of God’s creation. Solidarity means that “loving our neighbour” has cosmic dimensions in an interdependent world. In what ways can you and your school community build a stronger awareness and greater connection to our beautiful green earth and its inhabitants?

**Description:** This ambitious long-term project is a joint venture between the school, the Town of Innisfil and the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. The school uses the town park next door for some of its activities and students proposed improving it by building a running path, planting shade trees, creating an outdoor education centre with benches, native plants and more, and building a soccer field. Students worked with the school’s parent committee to obtain donations from local businesses, to invite the Director of Parks and Recreation to support them and to mobilize the town behind the project. Initial applications for the park project have been approved and, with the help of students, the garden in front of the school has been significantly improved, making it a warm and welcoming place, with two new benches already getting daily use.

**Project Type:** Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated
**School Name:** St. Francis of Assisi E S
**School Board:** Simcoe Muskoka CDSB

**Title: TNC: That’s Not Cool**

**REFLECTION ON ACTIVITY:** How does your school promote the Catholic Social Teaching “that we are all one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences”.

**Description:** Spearheaded by four student leaders and a teacher-facilitator, “That’s Not Cool” involved the making of a video to raise awareness of bullying in the school. The student leaders created an interesting logo that depicts bullying in a non-traditional way and that was used on t-shirts, posters for classrooms and a promotional banner. Thirty students in Grades 9 – 12 were then invited to participate in producing the video. A script was written, including scenarios focusing on new concerns such as cyber-bullying. The student actors practiced their parts and the video was filmed in the Grade 7/8 hallways. Everyone was excited to be part of the initiative because they had all been affected by bullying and wanted to help create positive change at the school. The completed video was presented to all the students involved at a pizza celebration towards the end of the school year. It was also be shown at an all-school assembly in September, 2009, when a new “That’s Not Cool” Committee was created.

**Project Type:** Student-Led Teacher-Facilitated
**Grade(s) Impacted:** 7-12, Teachers, Community
**School Name:** All Saints Catholic HS
**School Board:** Ottawa CDSB
Salt and Light link: [http://saltandlighttv.org/changingcourse/](http://saltandlighttv.org/changingcourse/)

Gang violence and intimidation are no longer confined to inner-city schools—increasingly, they have infected suburban neighbourhoods. Residents of Malton, Ontario have been shocked to find their own youth getting caught in the crossfire. Nearby Fletcher’s Meadow, an area within Brampton, runs the risk of developing similar problems due to rapid construction that outpaces community services.

In response, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board developed an ambitious vision to support at-risk youth. Among those benefitting is Chinel, a shy Grade 7 student whose high school mentor hopes to prepare him for adolescent pressures. Then there’s Latasha, a Grade 8 student conflicted between her popularity and her conscience. Finally, we meet the young cast of an anti-gang film directed by the high school communications teacher. The protagonist is played by Eddie, whose real-life temptations mirror those of his lawless character.

“Changing Course” follows these students for one school year, revealing their challenges, victories, and the limitless potential of Catholic education.
FAITH PRAYERS AND AFFIRMATIONS

COURAGE

I HAVE IDEAS

“Recognizes that there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges”. OCSGE 3(a)

SOLIDARITY

Prayers:

• Faith, Hope and Charity Prayer
  Loving God, we pray that the Toronto Catholic District School Board community continue to witness to the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.
  May we be people of FAITH, always willing to follow the example of Jesus in all that we do.
  May we be people of HOPE, always trusting in your loving presence in our lives.
  May we be people of CHARITY, always willing to give of ourselves to better the lives of others.

• Serenity Prayer
  God grant me the serenity
  to accept the things I cannot change;
  courage to change the things I can;
  and wisdom to know the difference.

  Living one day at a time;
  Enjoying one moment at a time;
  Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
  Taking, as He did, this sinful world
  as it is, not as I would have it;
  Trusting that He will make all things right
  if I surrender to His Will;
  That I may be reasonably happy in this life
  and supremely happy with Him
  Forever in the next.
  Amen.

  --Reinhold Niebuhr
- **Prayer for Global Solidarity** (By: Education for Justice)

  O Creator,
  our world is large, and yet the global community is so fragile.
  We glimpse the needs of our sisters and brothers,
  and those needs are great.
  We want to turn away, but you call us back.
  We want simple solutions,
  but you want us to help solve the complex problems.
  Through your church, you call us to listen, to learn, to reflect and to act.
  Give us a deep sense of our place in this web of Creation.
  Give us the wisdom of mind and generosity of heart
  to seek your will in the world today.
  Inspire us to respond to the call of your servant, Pope John Paul II,
  as he calls us to solidarity with impoverished countries of the world,
  So that all children of God might live in dignity and peace.
  Amen.

- “Be not afraid, I go before you always.” As we face this New Year, as we make New Year’s resolutions that fit our own circumstances and needs, we rely on God’s help and grace to make those changes that will improve our lives. For the courage to face our fears, and not to be ruled or fuelled by fear. We pray to You, Lord.
  
  **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

- That the example of Jesus, Mary and the saints will inspire us to act as people of courage. We pray to You, Lord.
  
  **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Affirmations:**

- I have thoughts and opinions that matter
- I make good choices
- I have hope for the future
- I solve problems with knowledge, understanding and prayer
- I know we are all equal and special
- I can begin to make changes in my life
- I can support others in need
- I can take the first step in helping myself
REFERENCES

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