



Assembly: Courage vs. dare

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| Year group: | Y3 – Y13 |
| Key subject: | PSHE |
| Cross curricular: | Citizenship |
| QCA scheme of work: | Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities. Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle. Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people. Developing skills of participation and responsible action. |
| Useful resources: | Trackoff resource DVD: Module: Graffiti: The thrill is gone. PC and projector or interactive whiteboard. A football and a spray can. |

The assembly plan

Aims

This whole school assembly looks at what it means to have the courage to resist peer pressure when someone is pushing us to do something that we know isn't right and safe – in this particular case spraying graffiti on the railway.

The assembly aims to:

- Answer the question: What is courage as opposed to dangerous, thrill-seeking behaviour?
- Encourage pupils to have the courage to say no if someone is pressurising them to take part in dangerous or criminal activity.
- Ensure that pupils understand that spraying graffiti or playing on the railway puts their lives at risk.

Introduction

We all may sometimes face a situation where someone is putting pressure on us to do something that we know isn't right; that we know isn't safe.

It can be difficult to resist this pressure and trust ourselves, especially if the person putting pressure on us is a good friend or someone we look up to. We all have the right to say no and trust our own judgement – but often that requires courage.

Main presentation

Chris and Luke: a play

Two pupils play the roles of CHRIS and LUKE, the two boys from *The thrill is gone* video. Note, they may wish to put the dialogue into their own language.

Chris and Luke are standing side by side in the front of the assembly. Luke has a football, and in his pocket a spray can.

CHRIS: Luke and I were always the best mates. We were always kicking the ball in the park and playing computer games.

Luke bounces the football.

CHRIS: Then Luke started hanging out with these other guys. He said they were really cool and doing all sorts of exciting stuff.

Luke shakes the spray can.

CHRIS: He said I should come along; that it was such a laugh.

LUKE: (Shaking the spray can) *Come on!*

CHRIS: I said it wasn't really my kind of thing...

LUKE: You're such a coward!

CHRIS: I didn't really like being called that, not by my best mate, so I went along. And this is what happened.

Video: The thrill is gone

Play the video *The thrill is gone*.

Allow the assembly to reflect for a while after the video ends.

Chris and Luke: part 2

Chris is standing at the front, facing the assembly.

Luke is sitting on a chair, sideways to the assembly, with the football on his lap.

CHRIS: It was the worst night of my life. I wish I had had the courage to stand up when Luke called me a coward. I wish I'd known how to persuade him not to go, either. Now he'll never kick the ball again – he was too badly hurt.

Luke drops the football on the floor.

Being challenged to do something you know isn't right

(Teacher)

The video we just saw was filmed with actors, totally safely, but it is based on real incidents where young people were hurt or even killed when they went to spray graffiti on the railway line.

The railway track is a very dangerous environment: you could get hurt or killed not just by a train but also by the electricity. Some people are not aware of this – but most probably are. But you have probably seen graffiti all over the railway. If people know how dangerous it is, why do you think they still do it?

Allow pupils to respond and write down their answers on the whiteboard. These may include:

- *There's a thrill to it.*
- *The person wants to 'prove' themselves.*
- *It's a show-off.*
- *People think it's cool.*
- *Someone is challenging them to dare to do it.*

Standing up for yourself

In our story today, Chris is being challenged by his best friend Luke to do something Chris knows isn't safe or right. It can be incredibly difficult to resist this kind of pressure.

We may feel that our friends think we are cowards or sissies. We may think that we'll lose our friends if we don't do what they want us to do. Peer pressure is a very real problem, and not only in schools but also in many work places. So, you shouldn't feel small or a coward if you find it difficult to say no.

Standing up for yourself requires real courage, and this is different thing from a pure dare; something that is thrill-seeking and dangerous.

Summary

Today we have looked at what it means to be courageous in the face of peer pressure, and why we should stand up for ourselves.

It is not easy – and it will help us to remember that we are not alone in this: almost everyone feels it. Let's finish with the words of Theodore Harold White, an American journalist and historian:

"To go against the dominant thinking of your friends, of most of the people you see every day, is perhaps the most difficult act of heroism you can perform."

Additional notes

This assembly is suitable for any primary or secondary school. Teacher adjustments can be made to adapt it for a single class.

The successful delivery of this assembly depends upon pupil involvement, so preparation is required.

The assembly would be especially well suited if your school is having a safety day, or if there have been incidents in your local area where young people are playing or spraying graffiti on the railway.

Extension/shortening tip

To lengthen:

Ask pupils for their ideas how to cope with peer pressure.