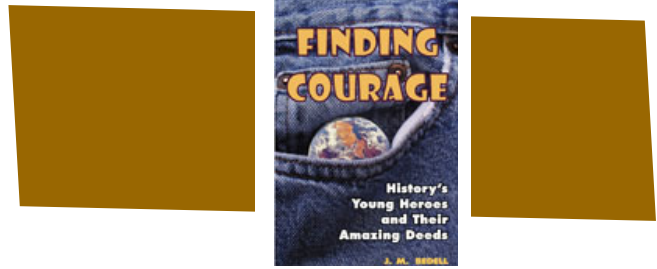


Classroom Guide for

Finding Courage:

History's Young Heroes and Their Amazing Deeds

By J.M. Bedell



A Note from the Author, J.M. Bedell:

The whisper of an idea for *Finding Courage* came back in 2002 while I was working as an intern at Beyond Words Publishing, a house that had already published several books about teens who had “rocked the world” with their inventions and discoveries. Unlike those books, however, I wanted to write about kids who had overcome adversity and then used their experiences to help others in crisis.

I started my search on the internet. After that, I went to the library and hunted through reference books and collections of historical works. I followed every lead, trying to find any mention of a young person doing something amazing. From those tidbits of information, I searched even further, reading old book manuscripts and newspapers, and contacting museums and individuals, trying to find every interesting detail about these teenagers’ lives.

After months of digging, I compiled a long list of names and then cut it down to the ones you will read about in this book. Sadly, many wonderful stories had to be left out. For this book, I wanted to span recorded history and the globe, and show today’s teens that throughout the ages kids have found the courage to stand up for their convictions and make positive changes in their worlds.

Before Reading:

Discuss the meaning of the word **courage**. Solicit definitions and examples from learners.

Read aloud Bernard Waber’s book *Courage*. Adjust and revise a class definition of **courage**.

Share Patricia Polacco’s book *Pink and Say* about two young Civil War soldiers. How would you define **courage** based on their actions?

Post these quotes about courage in the classroom and encourage discussion of the ideas:

“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.” - Eleanor Roosevelt

“History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.”
- Maya Angelou

“Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson

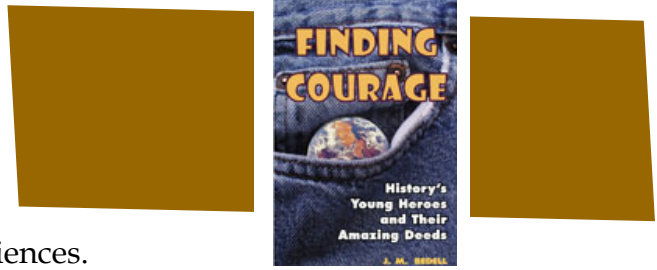
“Courage is rarely reckless or foolish . . . courage usually involves a highly realistic estimate of the odds that must be faced.” - Margaret Truman

“Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others.” - Robert Louis Stevenson

“Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage.” - Anais Nin

During Reading:

Choose two stories from *Finding Courage*. Use the Venn Diagram included in this Classroom Guide to compare the characters' experiences.



Comprehension Check:

Respond to thought-provoking questions and discuss reactions to the accounts of courage.

Chapter 1: Fa Mu-lan: China's Great Warrior

- What about Mu-lan's home life was different from girls' lives in your society?
- As Mu-lan served as one of the emperor's soldiers, her courage was reinforced by many choices and activities. What would her situation be like as a woman in a man's army? What might she have done to survive those long years of hiding her gender?

Chapter 2: King Alfonso XI: Liberator of Castile-León

- At age 14, Alfonso resolutely declared his desire to take control of the kingdom to which he was heir. What were the key issues and concerns a young man must take into account in leading Castile-León?

Chapter 3: Tom Savage: Interpreter and Peacemaker

- Imagine how torn Tom's allegiance must have been to Powhatan, yet he managed to keep both the natives and Jamestown officers at bay. What things did Tom need to consider from both groups?

Chapter 4: Sybil Ludington: Revolutionary War Messenger

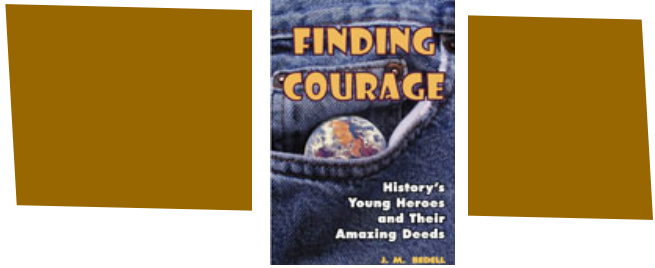
- What thoughts might Sybil have contemplated as she alerted the men?
- What might Sybil's mother have been thinking about her daughter?

Chapter 5: James Forten: Revolutionary War Hero

- How did James's education shape his life and experiences?
- Repeatedly, James gives up opportunities for freedom. How do these sacrifices influence his later choices?

Comprehension Check:

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Chapter 6: Levi Coffin: President of the Underground Railroad

- How did Levi's Quaker beliefs manifest themselves in his dealings with slaves?
- Explain Levi's statement: "The stock of the Underground Railroad ha[s] gone down in the market, the business [is] spoiled, the road [is] of no further use."

Chapter 7: Louis Braille: Inventor for the Blind

- Louis realized something important about how the brain interprets information. How did that influence his work on a code?
- What opportunities did his code open up for fellow blind students?

Chapter 8: Manjiro Nakahama: Japanese Ambassador

- When forced with the choice of going to America or attempting to return to Japan, what must Manjiro have considered on both sides of his decision?
- What emotions might Manjiro have experienced in Japanese prison?

Chapter 9: Manu [Lakshmibai]: Hero of India's First War for Independence

- Imagine Manu/Lakshmibai at age seven, marrying and becoming rani (queen). What about her life after marriage is unlike anything you could imagine?
- In what ways did her training prepare her for the fight against the British?

Chapter 10: Susie [Baker] King Taylor: Civil War Teacher and Nurse

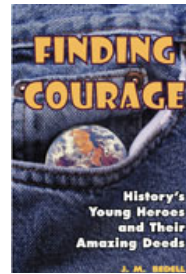
- In her younger year, what consequences might Susie have faced for her actions?
- How did her education lead her to more courageous acts?

Chapter 11: Ebba Lund: Savior of Danish Jews During World War II

- The Danish people demonstrated many acts of courage. How did they show solidarity with their Jewish friends?
- Ebba risks her life many times. What steps must she take to bring people to safety?

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Chapter 12: Pierre Labiche: French Resistance Fighter During World War II

- Adversity filled Pierre's life. What acts of courage must he have demonstrated before the war?
- Pierre and his Aunt Paulette worked for the Free France resistance. In his situation what might have worried you about the responsibilities he assumed?

Chapter 13: Claudette Colvin: Fighter for Black Civil Rights

- Faced with threats and policemen, how would you truly have reacted in Claudette's situation on the bus and in jail?
- What influence might Claudette and the girl named Mary Louise have had on Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights movement?

Chapter 14: Mary Beth Tinker: Champion for Student Rights

- What other nonviolent actions could citizens take to protest a decision or support a cause?
- Why might high courts support local decisions despite the seemingly unconstitutional nature of those decisions?

Chapter 15: Terry Fox: Heroic Athlete - The Marathon of Hope

- Terry Fox defined courage in several ways. What about his way of living shows his courage?

Chapter 16: Arn Chorn-Pond: Fighter for Peace in Cambodia

- Contrast the supposed courage of the Khmer Rouge with that of the refugees. What reasons would Arn have had for feeling like he was a victim AND a cause of the Cambodian genocide?

Chapter 17: Ryan White: Fighter for the Rights of Kids with AIDS

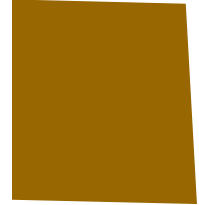
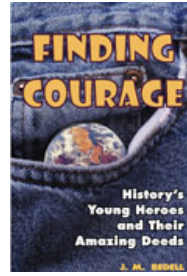
- Consider the physical, social, and emotional factors influencing Ryan's courage. What pulled at him the most?

Chapter 18: Trevor Ferrell: Crusader for the Homeless

- How did Trevor's small act grow into such a system of care for homeless people?

Comprehension Check:

Respond to thought-provoking questions and discuss reactions to the accounts of courage.



Chapter 19: Iqbal Masih: Fighter Against Child Labor

- What factors worked against Iqbal's quest for fairness in child labor?

Chapter 20: Kodjo Djissenou: Human Rights Activist

- When a powerless individual lost her voice for freedom, how did Kodjo's actions bring about change?

Chapter 21: Ibrahim (Alex) Bangura: Human Rights Activist

- What do you think happens when a person is brainwashed?

Chapter 22: Asel Asleh: Martyr for Peace

- This question is raised, "How can I love the man whom others say I must hate?" How do you interpret this based on Asel's life and experience?

Chapter 23: Henna Bakshi: Recipient of the Geeta Chopra Award for Bravery

- In Henna's place, how would your courage have caused you to act?

Chapter 24: Mayerly Sanchez: Founder of the Colombia Children's Movement for Peace

- In your area, what is one significant issue deserving of a children's vote? What would need to happen to make a change?

Chapter 25: Leonora Shiroka: Fighter for Peace in the Balkans

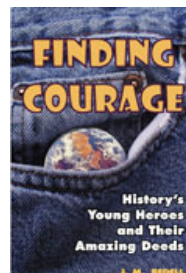
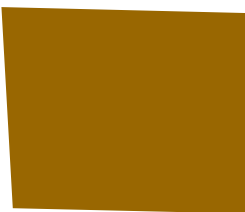
- Explain the meaning of the PostPessimist group name.
- What do you think can happen when two or more people refuse to hate each other?

Chapter 26: Alexandra Scott: Champion for a Cancer Cure

- What would be your lemonade stand cause and how would you go about convincing people to help?

Chapter 27: Dilli Chaudary: Antislavery Activist

- Imagine a place just around the world where slavery exists in the 21st Century. What actions would you take to make life free for others?



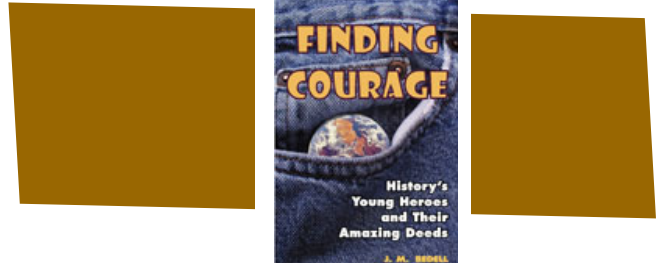
Vocabulary Development:

Consider discussing unfamiliar words with learners, making attempts to learn their meanings in the context of the young heroes' stories. As you learn together about the definitions, consider how the words relate to **courage**. Add any other words from the young heroes' stories that you think would relate to courage.

| | | | | |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Chapter 1 | Chapter 6 | Chapter 11 | Chapter 17 | Chapter 24 |
| formidable | undeterred | sabotage | compassion | guerillas |
| ballad | conferred | | | mandate |
| | | | | |
| Chapter 2 | Chapter 7 | Chapter 12 | Chapter 18 | Chapter 25 |
| regency | "au revoir" | ingenuity | deplorable | ethnic hatred |
| dowager | indomitable | | | |
| cortes | | | | |
| diplomatic | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Chapter 3 | Chapter 8 | Chapter 13 | Chapter 20 | Chapter 26 |
| indentured | interrogation | coerced | Slave-trafficking | legacy |
| delegation | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Chapter 4 | Chapter 9 | Chapter 14 | Chapter 21 | Chapter 27 |
| ruse | high-caste | time of reckoning | advocate | bonded labor |
| regiment | pilgrimage | capital punishment | | |
| | | | | |
| Chapter 5 | Chapter 10 | Chapter 16 | Chapter 23 | |
| euphoria | Emancipation | sanctity | promptitude | |
| rampant | Proclamation | | | |
| astute | | | | |
| integrity | | | | |

Curriculum Connections:

Use these activities to build on learners' experiences with *Finding Courage*.



Art –

Visually portray one of the young heroes from the book, keeping with the time period during which the person lived.

Create a comic strip of several frames that recreates a real or possible event from the life of one of the young heroes in the book.

Language Arts –

Develop a short story based on the actions of one of the heroes in *Finding Courage*. Focus on things that might really have happened to that person.

Brainstorm a list of times when you or someone you know acted courageously. Create a poem based on one of those actions, using the word COURAGE as your starting point.

Social Studies –

Visit the site for the Reebok Human Rights Award -

<http://www.reebok.com/x/us/humanRights/text-only/awards/> - and read about the award and some of the milestones. Check out the current and past awardees, from the present year, back to the award's inception in 1988.

Interview a person who is seen as courageous in either a noticeable or subtle way.

Research the history of a more famous hero, highlighting the courage the person exhibited. Given what you've read in *Finding Courage*, write that person's biography, including things from childhood that may have shaped his/her decisions and direction regarding specific activities and causes.

Read excerpts from *We Were There, Too!: Young People in U.S. History* by Phillip Hoose. Write about or discuss how these young people displayed courage in their actions and lives.

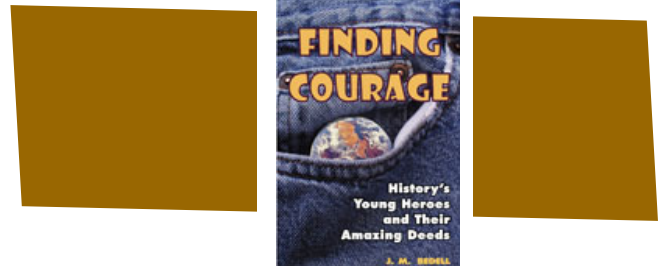
Create a timeline that shows the courageous young people from *Finding Courage* and other courageous souls from history.

Locate the countries or areas from which the young people from *Finding Courage* hailed on a world map and place a mark identifying each location. Viewing that map, what deductions can be made about courage amongst young people?

Go back to the chapter headings for each of the young heroes. Note their birth years and then scan the story to find when they first acted in a courageous manner. How long did many of these young people live?

Companion Books

These books also include the theme of courage and would make terrific extensions:



Cutler, Jane. *The Cello of Mr. O. Couch*, Greg, illus. Dutton, 1999. ISBN: 0-525-46119-1 (HC).

Dalgliesh, Alice. *The Courage of Sarah Noble*. Weisgard, Leonard, illus. Atheneum, 1987. ISBN: 0-684-18830-9 (HC).

Edmonds, Walter D. *The Matchlock Gun*. Lantz, Paul, illus. Putnam, 1989. ISBN: 0-399-21911-0 (HC).

Ellis, Deborah. *The Breadwinner*. Groundwood, 2001. ISBN: 0-888-99419-2 (HC).

Fritz, Jean. *The Cabin Faced West*. Putnam, 1997. ISBN: 0-399-23223-0 (HC).

George, Jean Craighead. *My Side of the Mountain*. Dutton Books, 1988. ISBN: 0-525-46346-1 (HC).

Giovanni, Nikki. *Rosa*. Collier, Brian, illus. Henry Holt, 2005. ISBN: 0-8050-7206-7 (HC).

Henkes, Kevin. *Sheila Rae, the Brave*. Greenwillow, 1987. ISBN: 0-688-07155-4 (HC).

Ho, Minfong. *The Clay Marble*. Sagebrush (rebound), 1999. ISBN: 0-785-72225-4 (LIB).

McDermott, Gerald. *Anansi the Spider: a tale from the Ashanti*. Henry Holt, 1972. ISBN: 0-8050-0210-X (HC).

Polacco, Patricia. *Thunder Cake*. Philomel, 1990. ISBN: 0-399-22231-6 (HC).

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic, 2000. ISBN: 0-439-12041-1 (HC).

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Riding Freedom*. Sagebrush (rebound), 2001. ISBN: 0-613-22765-4 (LIB).

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *When Marian Sang: the true recital of Marian Anderson*. Selznick, Brian, illus. Scholastic, 2002. ISBN: 0-439-269679 (HC).

Steig, William. *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. Simon & Schuster, 2005. ISBN: 1-416-90206-6 (HC).

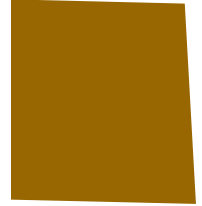
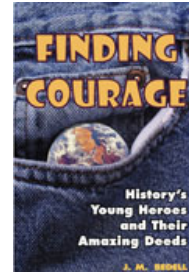
Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House on the Prairie*. Williams, Garth, illus. HarperCollins, 1953. ISBN: 0-060-26450-0 (HC).

Winter, Jeanette. *The Librarian of Basra: a True Story from Iraq*. Harcourt, 2005. ISBN: 0-152-05445-6 (HC).

About the Author:

J.M. Bedell spent most of her childhood daydreaming in hayfields, talking to cows and finding new friends between the pages of her books. Encouraged by a college professor to pursue a degree in Writing, she completed a BA in 1999 and an MFA in Creative Fiction and Nonfiction in 2005. J.M. realized a way to combine her writing skills and her love of history in writing the children's musical *Mischief and Eve* which premiered in October 2003. The success of that play encouraged her to continue writing. *Finding Courage: History's Young Heroes and Their Amazing Deeds*, published by Beyond Words in November 2004, was J.M.'s first nonfiction book for young readers. *Hildur, Queen of the Elves* is her second book, and it will be released in the spring of 2006. She is also a 2006 recipient of an Oregon Literary Fellowship for Young Readers Literature. J.M. lives in Portland, Oregon with her husband and two Siberian Huskies named Mauja and Siku. She loves being a full time writer, but when she's not writing or conducting research, she enjoys reading historical nonfiction and mysteries, watching happy ending movies, crocheting, and sewing.

Venn Diagram for *Finding Courage*



Choose two of the young heroes' stories from the book and compare them.

Indicate the name of each person outside the large circle.

Write things unique to each person in the circle by that person's name.
In the space where the circles intersect, write things they share.

