



OBJECTIVE:

Sometimes we can find ourselves on the wrong side of conviction, standing up for something or someone that in the end isn't worth the effort and figuring out how to stand up for what's right can be tricky. Someday our kids will be out on their own and have to make decisions about what to support. This lesson helps to influence students to stand up for what's right, even when others don't. This world needs a generation of superheroes—kids who grow up knowing how to stand for what is right, in the right way.

TIME NEEDED: 20-30 minutes

GROUP SIZE: Any size

MATERIALS:

- One unopened can of fruit with sides dented in and label removed
- Can opener
- Spoon or fork

LESSON:

Start your lesson by discussing the students what the word “convictions” means. Tell them, if you have the courage of your convictions, you have the confidence to do what you believe is right, even though other people may not agree or approve. You stand up for the values you have, even when it's not popular with others.

You have a special set of beliefs or values that determine (for you) what you believe to be right and wrong. They drive your behaviors and actions in every decision involving right and wrong. They determine your response to other people's actions, including your actions and how you will respond to situations.

Next, hold up the dented and unlabeled can for the students to see. Tell them you brought with you a can that doesn't look too nice. Ask what they notice about the can. (*it's dented, bent, no label etc.*) Have them imagine that the can represents “you”.

Ask them if they ever have felt like they are dented and dinged? Have they ever been picked on because of how they look, what they wear or how they talk? Show them the can and tell them it used to be very shiny in the beginning. So shiny that you could literally see yourself in it. It's so scuffed, so trashed and so marred that there is no reflection what so ever.

Now ask the students if they have ever felt like their life wasn't a reflection of what your values are? Have you ever felt that way? Do you find it difficult sometimes to not follow the crowd when they are teasing someone?

Talk about the fact there is no label and ask them what they think is in the can. Give the students an opportunity to give their ideas as to what is in the can. Then tell them, that what they are now doing is exactly

what some people do to us. They see the dents, scars and imperfections. They see the outside, but they do not know what is on the inside, so they label us. Right? Isn't that what people do...we label one another. We see what people look like on the outside and we see what their actions are and we immediately put a label on them...we de-value that person because we judge them by the look on the outside.

Explain that it is just like the can. We have de-valued it. Hold up the can and ask the students if you were at the store and you saw this setting on the shelf...would you buy it? Why not? Ask them to raise their hand if they would buy the can. Then ask the students if anyone would pay \$2.00 for it. Then continue to lower the price of the can (\$1.00, \$.50, \$.25, or \$.10). You may get some offers as you make the price go down. Explain that they have now just devalued the can. This is exactly what people do every day in society, we see it all the time. People de-value other people, all because of what we look like or act like on the outside and we forget to be true to our convictions or values. Our conviction for wanting to be liked by our friends trumps our convictions for showing respect towards others.

Now you need to tell the kids, what is on the inside is valuable. People sometimes put others down for what they look like or wear, how they speak or where they live. It doesn't matter what we look like on the outside, we are valuable. We all need to understand the balance of grace and truth, how to love others while being true to their convictions. If we stand up for the values that we set for ourselves and live by them, we recognize that it's not what is on the outside, but what is on the inside that matters.

Open the can of fruit. As you open the dented can, ask if anyone is interested in knowing what is on the inside of the can. Once you open the can, take a bite of the fruit and make a big deal of how good it tastes. That is just like what we should see in other people. We need to take the time to see what people are like on the inside before we judge them by looking at the outside. We might just find something very sweet and kind! We need to stand up for our values, and have the courage to look at everyone with compassion and kindness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What does it mean to stand up for your convictions or what you believe is right? *(If you have the courage of your convictions, you have the confidence to do what you believe is right, even though other people may not agree or approve.)*
- What are some values that we might have?
- Does our character play a role in what our values should be?
- Why is it important to have values?
- How can I stand up for myself and not hurt the feelings of others?
- Why is it hard to stand up for others when our friends might not agree?
- What does the word courage mean?
- Does it take courage to stand up for what is right and wrong? Why or why not?

IT TAKES COURAGE TO HAVE CHARACTER!

