



Series Theme: Following Jesus.

Series Overview: Have you ever wondered why bravery exists? There are great examples of bravery all around us, but what does it mean to follow Jesus bravely. This series is all about spiritual bravery, how we lost it, how we receive it, and how we live in it.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-3; 26-28; 2:8-9, 25; 3:1-4, 7-12, 14-15; Hebrew 12:3

Big Idea: We weren't created to be afraid, we were created to find our value, identity, and worth from God

Goal: To help students understand why bravery exists, how we lost it, and the promise of a brave act that would change everything.

Message Intro:

[TEACHER NOTE: Start the message with a story about a brave moment in your life. This is a personal illustration to set up the topic of bravery.]

What's the bravest thing you've done?

One of the bravest moments in my life happened when I was in college. I went to the local bookstore in town to check out the latest releases. Back in those days, physical bookstores still existed. I know there are still some around, but they're really an endangered species.

Literally, once I had walked through the door, I wasn't interested in the books anymore. There at the counter, selling books and music and coffee mugs (what else do you buy at a book store) with skill, accuracy, and beauty was the prettiest girl I had ever seen. She made all the glossy book jackets look dull. I was feeling all the feels.

Fortunately, I had a wingman, and everywhere we went in the store I just kept asking him to give me updates. "Is she looking over here?" "Did she seem impressed that I was in the dictionary aisle?" "Could you tell if she noticed my interest in indie rock over candy pop?" I couldn't even tell you why I went the store in the first place.

I eventually worked up the nerve to walk over to the counter and buy something. She broke the ice, “Did you find everything you were looking for?” I could tell she was in love. I said, “yes,” and felt a spark. She told me the cost and I gave her the money, then I left.

I was sweating big time. You know the feeling. You get a hall pass to go to the bathroom and you walk past your crush’s classroom and you can barely breathe.

My friend and I drove back to my dorm and I couldn’t get her out of my mind, so I did the bravest thing I had ever done, I called up the bookstore and asked for Katy. I introduced myself as the guy who bought the book on world peace, and she was like, “Okay.” My confidence soared, this was my chance. I asked her if she was doing anything on Friday night, and she said “no”.

We made plans and I hung up the phone. I was a warrior. I had climbed Mount Everest. I had faced Goliath, and now I had a date with someone I had just met.

We didn’t stay together. A few dates later she brought another guy with her, who I found out was her boyfriend. Who was braver in the end, her or me?

It’s funny now, but it felt really brave back then.

Let’s take a moment to unpack bravery. What is bravery, and what does it mean to be brave.

[TEACHER NOTE: I like to use a whiteboard or giant Post-It during interactive moments like these to white the answers.]

Give me some examples of bravery.
[Allow time for responses.]

When I was a kid, one of the clearest examples to me was Benny the Jet from the movie, *The Sandlot*. Benny was an amazing baseball player, and when his friend lost his stepdad’s baseball signed by Babe Ruth to a monster dog name Hercules, he faced the dog head-on and got the ball back. That’s what bravery looked like to me.

A lot of movies have made a lot of money simply based on the premise of bravery. Take the movie *Wakanda Forever*. It's a story about the bravery of the people of Wakanda to protect their country. One of the characters, Romanda said, "*Show them who we are.*" Essentially she said, "We are brave."

We have fictional examples of bravery, and we have real-life examples of bravery. When I think of bravery, I think of Jackie Robinson, the first African American baseball player to break the color barrier in 1947. Or Rosa Parks, who was willing to go to jail for sitting in the white section of the bus in 1955. Then, there were the first responders of the 9/11 attacks, who bravely sacrificed their lives to rescue people in New York City, DC, and Pennsylvania.

We have plenty of examples of bravery, but what is it and what does it mean to be brave?

Here's the definition of brave from the Marion-Webster Dictionary: "having or showing mental or moral strength to face danger, fear, or difficulty, having courage."

If you search brave or bravery on social media like TikTok, you'll see three types videos: 1.) You'll see videos of the military, showing people training or in combat. 2.) You'll see videos about social equality, with people marching or speaking out about something. 3.) You'll see videos of motivational quotes about facing our fears.

Stories are told, movies are made, and books are written about bravery, but today we're going to talk about spiritual bravery. This whole series is about following Jesus bravely.

Scripture Teaching Section:

Before we talk about spiritual bravery, we need to talk about fear, where it came from in the first place and how it affects our faith.

This takes us back to the first book of the Bible, Genesis. The Bible is a library collection of 66 books, and what we see happening in Genesis impacts the content of all of the them, especially what happens in the first three chapters, which is what we're going to look at today.

So, if you have your Bibles, open them up, or use your phone and follow along.

Starting with Genesis 1:1-3 *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Genesis 1:1-3 ESV*

The Bible is about God. The Bible is God’s story that people get to be a part of. But the Bible is not about us, it is for us, but the central figure is God. In it, we read about who He is, what He’s done, and how to know Him.

One thing to clarify, the Bible is not a science book. Genesis contains a creation account, but it’s really about the God who created everything and why He created it. Science tells us how the natural world works, the Bible tells us who made it and why.

Here’s a helpful summary of what the Bible is from *The Bible Project*: “The Bible is an ancient Jewish collection of sacred literature made up of many different literary styles. Each biblical book uses a combination of all the literary styles to make its unique contribution to the story of the Bible...The Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus.”

Genesis 1 uses the literary style of poetry, and verse 2 uses poetic terms to describe the state of things before everything was created. It was void and formless. It was chaos, and for the next 22 verses, God brings order out of chaos.

The climax of creation comes in Genesis 1:26-28 *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

*So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.*



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Scripture: Matthew 3:16-17; Genesis 1:1-2; John 3:8; Matthew 14:26-27, 28-29, 30-31; Romans 8:11, 16-17; Galatians 5:16-17

Big Idea: The Holy Spirit empowers us to walk bravely.

Goal: The help students understand who the Holy Spirit is, and what it means to walk in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Conversation is key. Create a safe space for students to be known and belong. Adjust questions as needed, but don't feel like you need to rush to finish the guide or answer all the questions. Build trust in your group to strengthen relationships and encourage vulnerability.

Discussion Questions:

- What were the highs and lows from your week, so far?
- How would you recap the message today?
- How is life similar to Peter walking on water?
- What did you learn about the Holy Spirit that you didn't know before?
- How would you explain what it means to 'walk in the Spirit'?

Going Deeper:

- Read and Study John 14:15-31; 16:4b-15 together as a group:
 - What are the different roles of the Holy Spirit?
 - What is the ultimate purpose of the Holy Spirit?

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