



# BUILDING CHARACTER

MARCH

Two seeds lay side by side in the fertile spring soil. The first seed said, "I want to grow! I want to send roots deep into the soil beneath me, and push my sprouts through the earth above me. I want to unfurl my tender buds like banners to announce spring. I want to feel the warmth of the sun on my face and the fresh morning dew on my petals." And so she grew. The second seed said, "I am afraid. If I send my roots into the ground below, I don't know what I will encounter in the dark. If I push my way through the hard soil above me I may damage my delicate sprouts. What if I let my buds open and a snail tries to eat them? And if I were to open my blossoms, a small child may pull me up from the ground. No, it is much better for me to wait until it is safe." And so she waited. A yard hen scratching around in the early spring ground for food found the waiting seed and promptly ate it. (*Chicken Soup for the Soul*, Hansen) Moral of this story: Without the courage to try new things in order to grow, you will be swallowed up by life.

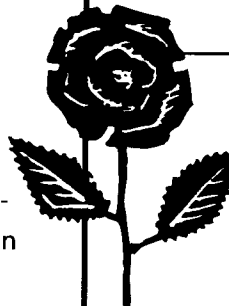
## COURAGE AT HOME

1. Create a "Badge of Courage" to bestow on family members who demonstrate courage when facing a difficult situation.
2. Inspire your child to show courage by sharing a story about a hero. Look for examples from your family history or the newspaper.
3. Role-play situations with your child by asking questions such as, "How would you practice courage if your friends want you to try something that you know is wrong, or you are playing with a toy you borrowed and it breaks?" Talking through possible real-life dilemmas beforehand gives your child confidence to do the right thing.
4. Celebrate courage by deciding as a family on a challenge that requires courage...then do it together (e.g., introduce yourselves to a new neighbor or an old neighbor you don't know).

## Actions that Take Courage

- Admitting you are wrong.
- Doing what is right when everyone else isn't.
- Speaking to someone you don't know.
- Saying "no" when people are trying to get you to do something you know you shouldn't do.
- Telling the truth and accepting the consequences.
- Standing up for something you believe in even though it may mean rejection or ridicule.
- Confronting a fear without running away.
- Defending someone who is unpopular.
- Being the only one.
- Taking a risk.
- Sharing your heart honestly.

Dr. Steve Stephens, psychologist



*Courage is not the towering oak  
That sees storms come and go,  
It is the fragile blossom  
That opens in the snow.*

Alice MacKenzie Swaim

BUILDING CHARACTER...THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

