



Activity #1 – Lincoln’s Courage on Black Rights

- Target grade level: secondary/college
 - Character quality emphasized: courage, leadership
1. For Lincoln’s vision for the future and his commitment to equality, there is perhaps no better Lincoln reading than the James Conkling letter. Explain before reading that President Lincoln was invited back to Springfield, Illinois in 1863 to speak regarding the Emancipation Proclamation, which much of the country wanted him to retract. Lincoln could not visit Springfield so he decided to write a letter defending the Proclamation and explaining his vision. The letter’s importance to history cannot be overestimated.
 2. When finished reading, ask students this question: “What phrase stuck out to you?”
Have them respond in an online poll (such as polleverywhere.com) or enter all of their responses to a word document and create a Wordle (www.worditout.com is one such site).
 3. Explain the significance of the Lincoln letter of the promise made written in August 1863, and the significance of the “I Have a Dream” speech of Martin Luther King, made at the Lincoln Memorial almost 100 years later to the day in which King refers to the promise the great emancipator began.

Activity #2 – Lincoln and his Cabinet: Courage through the Emancipation Proclamation

- Target grade level: secondary/college
 - Character quality emphasized: courage, leadership
1. It is greatly under-appreciated how much courage it took for Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation then not retract it. The risks involved in issuing the E.P. many, and many in Lincoln’s own Cabinet felt issuing the Proclamation would be too risky. To appreciate that, distribute or post online “My Whole Soul Is In It” which is a play based upon diaries and other accounts of the Cabinet meetings in 1862 over the E.P.
 2. Students can act it out or do it as a dramatic reading before an audience. Perhaps parents and other students can watch it.
 3. Read to students what Abraham Lincoln wrote to James Conkling in 1863, after many tried to get Lincoln to retract the Proclamation. Lincoln writes: “If they (Negro people) stake their lives for us, they must be prompted by the strongest motive—even the promise of freedom. And the promise being made, must be kept.” Ask the students how statement shows great courage and leadership.

Activity #3 – It takes courage

- Target grade level: elementary/secondary
 - Character quality emphasize: courage
1. Read the following story: Sophia, a 5-year old girl, walks out on the diving board. Her mom is in the swimming pool below encouraging her to jump. Sophia's legs are shaking. She tells her mom that she doesn't think she can do it. Sophia's mom offers more words of encouragement. Sophia plugs her nose, closes her eyes and jumps in the pool. How did she act with courage?
 2. Have students list their and things they would need courage to face.
 3. Show videos on the Civil Rights movement & discuss the courage needed to face that.