



Week 3 – Instructions

INCLUDED MATERIALS:

Story – Courage’s Independence Day
Decision Making and Refusal Skill Visuals
Freeze Pops

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Place story in the binder
- Ask for volunteers to hold the visuals
- As you read the story have the volunteers come to the front as the bolded statements are read
- The story does not tell the youth which refusal skill Courage uses. Instead have the youth decide which skill Courage could use and have them give examples of the skill.
- After reading the story hand out one freeze pop to each youth. You can freeze the pops prior to the day you decide to read the story, so the youth have a snack or have the youth freeze them when they return home.

Week 3 Story – Courage’s Independence Day

Courage turned off his light and settled into bed, but he knew he was way too excited to sleep. He felt more excited than he did on Christmas Eve or the night before his birthday.

Tomorrow, Courage would take another leap toward independence! Mama had given him permission to ride his bike to the King of Purrsa Mall with Lorenzo. Staring up at the ceiling, Courage started to feel a little nervous about tomorrow. He did not want to mess anything up. He wanted Mama to trust him, so he could have more independence to do other activities alone. Mama had spent all last week talking to him about decision-making skills, and ways he could refuse if his friends asked him to do something he knew could lead to trouble. Courage lay in bed, reviewing all that Mama had taught him.

According to Mama, before making any decision you must **Freeze**, so you can pause to reflect about your problem and **Think** about what your options are and the consequences of your actions. Mama also taught Courage refusal skills. Refusal skills are different ways to say no. The simplest way to refuse is to simply say “**No, Thank You,**” but Mama explained it is not always the easiest. Saying no to friends is hard, because we do not want them to tease us, and we do not want to lose friends or make them mad at us. If he feels afraid to say no, Mama taught Courage to **Walk Away, Make an Excuse, State the Facts** or to come up with a **Better Idea**.

Courage practiced these skills over and over in his mind. He imagined himself saying “**No, Thank You,**” if a friend asked him to be mean to another friend. Courage thought about **Walking Away** if a stranger asked him to try vaping. Courage also imagined himself **Stating the Facts** to a friend who wanted him to steal something at the mall. He would tell his friend it is illegal, and he would not want to get arrested. Lastly, Courage imagined himself coming up with a **Better Idea**, like going to play basketball rather than trying drugs or alcohol. Falling off to sleep, Courage doubted he would even need any of these skills.

Courage woke up before his alarm. He dressed quickly and ran out to the kitchen to gobble up the breakfast Mama made for his big day. As he rinsed off his dishes, Mama reminded him, “Don’t forget the skills we talked about last week.

Stop and think before making a decision, and if you can't say 'No,' there are other ways to keep yourself out of trouble.”

“I remember, Mama,” Courage assured her. “Don't worry, I won't let you down. I'll be home at 2 this afternoon.”

“I'm not worried,” Mama replied. “Keep your phone on, be safe and have fun! I'll see you this afternoon.”

Courage kissed Mama on the cheek and ran out to meet Lorenzo, who was already waiting at the corner. The boys put on their helmets and took off for the King of Purrsa Mall.

As they started off, Lorenzo slowed down. “Hey Courage, I heard Mikey's parents went away for the day, and he invited us over. I think we should skip the mall and head to Mikey's.”

Courage just wanted to go to the mall but now he had a decision to make. **Can you help Courage? How can Courage make the right decision? Which refusal skill can Courage use?**

Thanks for helping Courage! Once Courage used a refusal skill, Lorenzo responded, “Ok, ok, Courage. Let's go to the mall.”

“That was easy enough,” Courage thought as he rode off with Lorenzo.

Arriving at the mall, the boys decided they were hungry from the bike ride and their first stop would be for a pretzel and soda. They locked up their bikes and headed toward the pretzel shop. But, as they walked into the mall, Courage noticed his friend Cora by the entrance, hanging out with some kids he did not recognize. Cora waved for him and Lorenzo to come over.

“Hey Cora! What's up?” Courage asked.

“Not much,” Cora said. “We are just hanging out.”

Courage noticed Cora's friends were passing around a vape pen. Cora got the pen and offered it to Courage and Lorenzo.

“Not again,” Courage thought. Help Courage out. How can Courage make the right decision? Which refusal skill can Courage use?

Thanks for helping Courage, again!

After Courage used another refusal skill, Cora said, “No big deal, Courage. Have fun today.” Courage and Lorenzo finally headed to get that pretzel.

Courage and Lorenzo enjoyed their pretzel then went into the different stores. They looked at clothing, bought some bubble gum at the candy store, and played a bunch of games at the arcade.

“What a great day!” Lorenzo told Courage.

“The best!” Courage responded. “Come on Lorenzo let’s head to Game Stop before going home.”

As the boys ran off towards Game Stop, they spotted Mikey and some other friends.

“Hey Courage, Lorenzo! I thought you guys were coming over to my house,” Mikey shouted.

Courage and Lorenzo walked over to Mikey. “We thought about it, but we made plans a while ago to hang out here today,” Courage explained.

“What are you guys doing here?” Lorenzo asked.

“We got bored, so we decided to see what was happening here,” Mikey said “We are going to see about stealing some older video games. Come with us. It will be fun!”

Courage could not believe he needed to make another tough decision. Being responsible is hard work, he realized. Lorenzo pulled Courage aside and asked, “What do you think, Courage? We can go and not steal anything. We were headed there anyway.”

“I don’t know, Lorenzo. Seems like more trouble than we need,” Courage said.

How can Lorenzo and Courage make the right decision? What refusal skills can the boys use to steer clear of trouble with Mikey?

Thanks for helping Courage and Lorenzo make a good decision.

After the drama with Mikey, the boys decided they had had enough excitement for one day, and they left the mall to bike ride home.

“Thank you for a great day Lorenzo, and for sticking by me today. Thanks for being a great friend,” Courage said.

“Any time, Courage,” Lorenzo replied. “And thank you for helping me make good choices today. I had a great time. Let’s head home.”

Mama sat at the kitchen table waiting for Courage.

“Hey Mama, I’m home,” Courage shouted as he entered the front door, and ran to the kitchen to talk to Mama about his day.

“So, tell me about your trip to the mall with Lorenzo,” Mama asked.

Courage told her all about his adventure, and how he needed to **Freeze** and make decisions all day long. Courage thanked Mama for teaching him refusal skills and told her how they helped him to avoid trouble today.

“I’m so proud of you, Courage,” Mama said, as she hugged him tight.

“Thanks Mama! But, boy, being an adult is hard work. I think I’ll stay a kid for a little while longer if that’s ok with you.”

Mama laughed and told Courage that it was fine with her.