



WEEK #1

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- T-shirt outline handout
- Crayons or markers

INSTRUCTIONS:

- After reading the story, give each youth a t-shirt handout. Instruct the youth to create an anti-vaping/smoking t shirt for COCA's t-shirt contest.
- When the youth finish their designs, collect all the t-shirts, and keep in the binder. Next week, give the t-shirts to COCA staff. Before the end of the summer, COCA will choose a winning design from all the summer camps that handed in t-shirts. COCA will transform the winning design into a real t-shirt for their mascot Courage to wear.

WEEK #1 STORY - COURAGE VISITS POPPI

As the sun started to peek through Courage's bedroom window, he could feel the sunlight on his cheeks. Suddenly, Courage popped out of bed shouting, "Oh no! I'm going to be late for school!"

But as he got up, he quickly remembered, "It's Saturday and the first day of summer vacation!" Courage laid back down letting this amazing revelation sink in. Excitedly, Courage thought to himself, "There's nothing to do today but eat cereal, watch Saturday morning cartoons, and find some fun outside."

The visions of his Saturday fun day were interrupted by his mother shouting.

"Courage! Couuurragge! Are you up??!"

"Yes, Mama. I am up," Courage shouted back.

"Ok, hurry up and get out here, I have chores for you on this beautiful Saturday morning!"

"Well, there goes my Saturday fun day," Courage mumbled.

"What did you say, I couldn't hear you," Mama replied.

"N-n-nothing Mama, I'm coming!"

Courage washed up, brushed his teeth, and got dressed. With a little less pep in his step now, he headed out to get some breakfast and find out what chores his mother had lined up for him.

Courage walked into the kitchen. Rashawn sat in his highchair, tossing his scrambled eggs to the floor while giggling, as Auntie Maria kept bending over to pick them up. Courage could not help but laugh.

Mama handed Courage a great big bowl of his favorite chocolatey cereal and said, "Here, go eat your cereal and watch a few cartoons. When you finish rinse out your bowl and I will give you the chore list."

"Thanks, Mama!"

“Maybe this day will not be all that bad,” Courage thought.

As Courage sat watching cartoons, his mother came in and explained that she had gotten called into work for a few hours this morning. Courage’s mother is a nurse, and he is so proud that his mama helps people.

“I hung the chore list on the fridge. When you finish your chores, you can find something fun to do. Just make sure you tell Auntie Maria everything you plan to do today. When I get home, we can order pizza and watch a movie,” his mother said.

“Ok,” Courage replied, “Thanks, Mama! See you later, don’t work too hard.”

Mama kissed Courage on the cheek and left for work. Courage finished his cereal and headed for the kitchen to look at his chore list. He hoped it was not too long, because he really wanted to have fun today. To his surprise, Courage discovered there were only two items on the list:

- 1) Take out all the trash;
- 2) Take the bag of groceries in the pantry to Poppi’s house.

Poppi, Courage’s grandmother, lived in the neighborhood near the basketball courts at Drug Free Park. Courage packed the groceries and his basketball in his backpack and headed towards the door. Before running out he shouted, “Auntie Maria I’m leaving for Poppi’s house and then I’m going to shoot some hoops at the basketball courts. I’ll be home by lunchtime.”

“OK,” Auntie replied. “Have fun and be safe.”

Courage hopped on his bike, put on his helmet, and sped off towards Poppi’s house. Courage zipped around the corner near the basketball courts and started to slow down as he noticed a group of kids standing near the hoops. Courage could see they were inhaling on something, but he did not know what they were doing. The object had the shape of a cigarette and Courage noticed a little smoke, but it did not look like a cigarette, and it did not smell like a cigarette. Courage did not recognize any of the kids hanging out, so he kept on riding until he reached Poppi’s house.

Running in the front door, Courage yelled, “Poppi I’m here, where are you?” and slammed the door behind him.

Poppi called from her living room and scolded him, teasingly: “How many times have I told you not to slam my front door?”

Courage responded by giving Poppi a great big hug. Poppi smiled and asked Courage to put the groceries on her kitchen table.

“I got your favorite Dunkaroo snacks,” Poppi said “Grab a pack or two while you are in there.”

“Great!! Thanks, Poppi, you’re my favorite!”

Courage hurried back to the living room to visit with Poppi, but he could not stop thinking about the kids he had noticed by the hoops. Poppi knew by the look on Courage’s face that something was bothering him. She patted the seat next to her on the couch and said, “Sit right here and tell me what’s bothering you, Courage.”

Courage knew that Poppi would be the best person to ask about what he saw at the hoops. Poppi seemed to know everything, always had the right answers, and could make Courage feel better about anything going on in his life. Courage could always count on Poppi. So, he sat down and told Poppi all about the kids at the basketball court. Of course, Poppi knew exactly what Courage had witnessed. She grabbed her laptop and pulled up some articles and pictures. Poppi showed Courage a picture of an electronic nicotine delivery system device, usually called a vape pen.

“That’s exactly what they were inhaling on,” Courage told Poppi.

“This is an electronic cigarette,” Poppi explained “People use these to vape. An electronic cigarette uses a battery that heats up liquid, which turns it to an aerosol that is breathed into the lungs. The liquid is not water. People are not inhaling steam.

When a person vapes, they ingest an aerosol that contains heavy metals like nickel, tin and lead and hundreds of other chemicals that can cause cancer and other lung diseases. The more a person vapes, the more they increase their risk of becoming very sick. Both cigarettes and electronic cigarettes contain nicotine. Do you know what nicotine is?” Poppi asked Courage.

“It’s the addictive chemical found in cigarettes,” Courage responded.

“Yes! You are right, Courage,” Poppi said." Nicotine is a stimulant, which means it increases breathing and heart rate. Smoking and vaping are both harmful to the lungs and heart because when the heart beats faster it needs more oxygen but smoking and vaping prevent oxygen from getting to the heart. Over time, a lack of oxygen damages the heart. The younger a person is when they begin to smoke or vape, the more likely they are to become addicted to nicotine. Developing an addiction to nicotine also increases the risk of developing an addiction to other substances.”

Courage sat silent for a few minutes, thinking about all that Poppi had just said. “What are you thinking, Courage?” Poppi asked.

After a few more seconds of silence, Courage finally spoke. “I’m thinking that the only thing that is safe to put in our lungs is air. I’m also wondering if my friends know how dangerous vaping is, and I want to find a way to let them know.”

Poppi and Courage sat and talked about ways that Courage could spread the word about the dangers of smoking and vaping.

“I have the best idea,” Poppi said. “We can make you a t-shirt to wear that explains why smoking is dangerous. People will see it and maybe even ask you questions.”

“Yes! Let’s do that!”

Poppi got some supplies and they sat down to begin designing Courage’s shirt. “Coming up with an idea is harder than I thought it would be,” Courage told Poppi.

Poppi laughed and agreed. “Let’s ask for some help.”

Courage texted some friends to come over to Poppi’s. Within the hour, Courage and his friends were making t-shirts with Poppi and learning how to keep their bodies safe and strong.