

# SASO MIDDLE SCHOOL CHARACTER EDUCATION TEACHING GUIDE

## TOPIC: COURAGE & RESPONSIBILITY (Alex Ruoff SASO DVD)

Dr. Carolyn Peluso Atkins, Professor  
Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology  
College of Human Resources & Education  
West Virginia University

**Note to Teacher:** This lesson encompasses one of the Six Pillars of Character ([josephsoninstitute.org](http://josephsoninstitute.org)): Responsibility. Specifically, it focuses on duty and accountability. It offers the teacher guidelines to follow after students have viewed the DVD of Alex Ruoff: Courage and Responsibility.

Discussion questions, scenarios, and suggestions for writing and speaking assignments have been designed to develop student critical thinking, reflection, interaction, and creativity. Discussion questions and suggestions for writing and speaking assignments are interchangeable and should be determined by the teacher.

With regard to discussion questions and scenarios, teachers may pose questions to students individually or in small groups. With regard to the latter, a spokesperson for each group should be selected to summarize his or her group's discussion to the rest of the class.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is courage?
2. Who do you know who is courageous and why?
3. What is responsibility?
4. Who do you know who is a responsible person and why?
5. Are you a courageous person? Why? Give examples.
6. Are you a responsible person? Why? Give examples.
7. Are heroes courageous and responsible people? Please explain.
8. Who are your heroes? Describe them.
9. What types of jobs attract people who are courageous and responsible?
10. What courageous and responsible things can you do to make your school a better place?

11. What courageous and responsible things can you do to make your home life better?
12. What courageous and responsible things can you do to make your community a better place?

**Scenarios:** What would you do?

1. There is a new student in your class in school. This student has just moved to the area and does not know anyone. Your friends do not like the student and refuse to speak to him/ her or to include him/her in their activities. What would you do?
2. As you are walking down the hallway in your school, you see another student ahead of you accidentally drop a twenty dollar bill on the floor. Does it make a difference whether the student comes from a rich or poor family? What would you do?
3. One of your friends is a very popular student but lazy academically. He wants you to write a book report for him. He needs to get a B on the report in order to remain eligible to play school sports. What would you do?
4. Everyone in your class will be divided into two basketball teams. You are the captain of one of those teams. One student in the class has some physical problems and cannot move as quickly as the other students. You and the captain of the other team will take turns choosing the players on your teams. What would you do about the student with the physical problems?
5. You studied a lot for a test, but your best friend did not. On test day, he sits beside you and asks if you will position your test so he can copy from it. What would you do?

**Writing/Speaking Assignments:** Students either may write a paper or give an oral presentation about the topic (length and guidelines to be determined by the teacher).

1. Define courage in your own words and give examples to explain your definition.
2. Define responsibility in your own words and give examples to explain your definition
3. Describe someone you know (or know of) who is or was courageous.
4. Describe someone you know (or know of) who is or was responsible.

5. Interview your family members and/or friends and ask them to define courage and responsibility and to tell you about a time when they acted in a courageous and/or responsible manner.
6. Interview your family members and/or friends and ask them to define courage and responsibility and to tell you about a time when you acted in a courageous and/or responsible manner.
7. Describe a time in your life when you were courageous and/or responsible and how your actions made you feel.
8. Describe a time in your life when you were not courageous and/or responsible and how your actions made you feel.
9. Who was Rosa Parks? Why was she courageous?
10. Are courage and responsibility important in our today's society? Why or why not?
11. Write a nonfiction or fiction story about courage and/or responsibility.
12. Write a poem or song about courage and/or responsibility.
13. Select one of the quotes about courage below and explain what it means. Or, find a quotation about courage and explain what it means. Identify the author of the quote and describe who that individual is (e.g., Abraham Lincoln, 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States).
14. Select one of the quotes about responsibility below and explain what it means. Or, find a quotation about responsibility and explain what it means. Identify the author of the quote and describe who that individual is (e.g., Abraham Lincoln, 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States).

**Quotations about Courage:**

1. You must do the thing you think you cannot do. (Eleanor Roosevelt)
2. Every oak tree started out as a couple of nuts who stood their ground.  
(anonymous)

3. A life making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing at all. (George Barnard Shaw)
4. Every man has his own courage, and is betrayed because he seeks in himself the courage of other persons. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
5. Cowards die many times before their deaths. The valiant never taste of death but once. (Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, II, ii, 32-37)
6. Hard things are put in our way, not to stop us, but to call out our courage and strength. (Unknown)
7. I believe that anyone can conquer fear by doing the things he fears to do. (Eleanor Roosevelt)
8. Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
9. Fear is never a reason for quitting; it is only an excuse. (Norman Vincent Peale)
10. All our dreams can come true - if we have the courage to pursue them. (Walt Disney)
11. You can conquer almost any fear if you will only make up your mind to do so. For remember, fear doesn't exist anywhere except in the mind. (Dale Carnegie)
12. To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice. (Confucius)

### **Quotations about Responsibility:**

1. We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort. (Jesse Owens)
2. We are not here merely to make a living. We are here to enrich the world. (Woodrow Wilson)
3. When it's all over, it's not who you were. It's whether you made a difference. (Bob Dole)
4. When we have begun to take charge of our lives, to own ourselves, there is no longer any need to ask permission of someone. (George O'Neil)

5. Within each of us lies the power of our consent to health and sickness, to riches and poverty, to freedom and to slavery. It is we who control these, and not another. (Richard Bach)
6. You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today. (Abraham Lincoln)
7. You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of. (Jim Rohn)
8. Don't spend your precious time asking "Why isn't the world a better place?" It will only be time wasted. The question to ask is "How can I make it better?" To that there is an answer. (Leo Buscaglia)
9. The price of greatness is responsibility. (Winston Churchill)
10. It is a painful thing to look at your own trouble and know that you yourself and no one else has made it. (Sophocles)
11. Be the change you want to see in the world. (Mahatma Gandhi)
12. You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say. (Martin Luther)