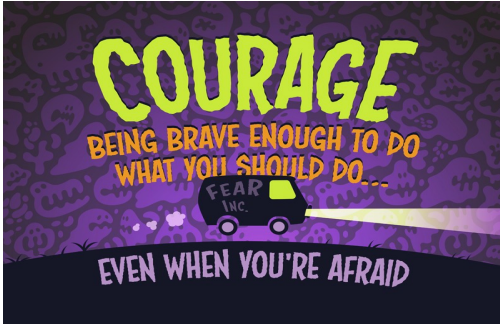


Black BELT EXCELLENCE



July Theme: "Courage"

Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go. Joshua 1:9

As America marks its 250th anniversary, the **courage** of the 56 Founders who signed the Declaration of Independence—putting their lives and property on the line for liberty—echoes into modern celebrations across the United States.

The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence celebrates two and a half centuries of liberty and the foundational courage required to forge the nation in 1776. It honors the resilience of the 56 patriots who risked everything to establish America's democratic ideals.

The Declaration of Independence masterfully wove the concepts of **courage** and **God** together. It argued that unalienable rights come from a "Creator"—not a king—making the case that defending freedom required profound moral courage. The signers mutually pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor while relying on "divine Providence." The intertwining of these themes is a deep historical and philosophical cornerstone of the American founding.

The Declaration of Independence explicitly refers to God **four times** to justify America's freedom:

1. **"Nature's God"**: The preamble opens by stating that the colonies are entitled to a separate status under the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God."
2. **"The Creator"**: The most famous line asserts that all people "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," meaning human rights come from God, not the government.
3. **"The Supreme Judge of the World"**: In the closing paragraph, the authors appeal to God to witness the purity and justice of their intentions.
4. **"Divine Providence"**: The final sentence expresses a "firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence" as the signers pledge their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor.

In our modern life an example of **courage** is when someone is bullying you at school. You've been able to avoid them...until today. Now they are coming right towards you, with courage you know you can face them. Not starting a fight, not backing away, yes, you can face them. How? Because you are **never alone**.

When we believe and trust in God we have a unique source of strength and courage. There will be times when we're going to be afraid. But we can trust in God who is bigger than us. And put our hope in God who is with us and is in control of every situation. Because of God, we can find the strength to be courageous everyday.

This month my son/daughter or student has demonstrated both at home and at school those qualities of responsibility required by our school for students seeking to earn the *Black Belt Excellence Stripe*.

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature _____

Date Signed by Instructor _____

6 Requirements of the Stripe of Excellence

- ◆ Black Belt Excellence behavior at home
- ◆ Black Belt Excellence behavior and passing grades at school
- ◆ Overall performance and attendance at the karate school
- ◆ Completion of the monthly Black Belt Excellence activity sheet and assignment
- ◆ Returning the Black Belt Excellence sheet when due
- ◆ Returning the Excellence sheet on time, qualifies you for student of the month and belt testing

Return your BBE Sheet to an instructor at the beginning of class to receive your black stripe.

Due by July 27-28

Due by July 27-28

Name: _____

Answer the following questions:

1. How many times is God explicitly referred to in the Declaration of Independence? _____

2. What are they: _____

3. How many founders signed the Declaration of Independence _____

4. What did they punt on the line that represents courage? _____

Fill in the blanks:

Be strong and _____. Do not be _____. Do not lose _____.

I am the _____ your God. I will be with you _____ you go.

_____ 1:9

Rank the following from most courageous (1) to least courageous (6).

_____ To try out for a sports team when your not sure if you will make the team

_____ To try to make a new friend when your not sure if they will like you

_____ To say no to cigarettes when all you other friends are smoking

_____ To try to water-ski in front of your friends when you have never tried it before

_____ To admit to your parents that you told them a lie

_____ To help someone who is being bullied

