

## Take Courage

Readers' Theater: Illustration of a story told by Tony Campolo. The last gladiator competition in the Roman Coliseum was defeated by a little monk who was courageous enough to follow God's direction.

All: (heads down)

One: (looking through a dictionary) Courage: The quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty. (turn head)

Two: (imitate holding a gun) Danger!

Three: (grab ankle) Pain!

Four: (show muscle) with firmness

Five: (hand out) without fear

One: (close book) bravery. So...

Two: (step into line) Take

Three: (step into line) Courage.

Four: (step into line) Be strong

Five: (step into line) and courageous.

One: The Lord instructed us to be courageous over fifteen times in the Bible.

Four: Yeah, don't be a little girlie man who has no muscle and who can be crushed like a little walnut by my little pinkie finger.

Five: Yeah man, hear us now, believe us later. You better PUMP UP YOUR COURAGE.

Three: (roar-like the cowardly lion) Courage, if I only had courage.

Two: Yeah, and a brain.

Three: Ahhhhhhhh (drop to one knee)

Five: (preferably use a girl) ATTENTION! To your feet men. I've had it with all of this liverbelly, yell belly, bawlin' and squawlin'. It's got to stop, pronto. You sound like a bunch of women.

Get on your guard. Stand firm in the faith; be of courage. Be strong (all strike muscle pose). Now it's time for Mr. (one's name) Neighborhood. Are you ready?

All: Yes sir, we love Mr. (one's name) Neighborhood.

Five: I can't hear you.

All: Yes sir, we love Mr. (one's name) Neighborhood.

Five: At ease. (all relax and five get back in position)

One: (putting on a sweater, clearing throat, and reading from a book) Good morning and welcome to Mr. (one's name) Neighborhood. Today's story I about a little monk (four step forward / everyone in a straight line behind) who lived hundreds of years ago. He was a farmer.

All: (sing and slap leg) "The farmer in the dell, the farmer in the dell, Hi Ho, the dairy O, the farmer in the dell."

One: One day the little monk felt that God was calling him to move to the big city.

All: (sing and do high kicks) "Start spreading the news. I'm leaving today. Going to make a brand new start of it in ancient Rome."

One: The little monk had no idea about what he would find in the big city. But obediently, he went down the road to Rome.

All: (sing and march) "On the road again. Just can't wait to get on the road again."

One: When the little monk arrived in Rome, he was amazed.

Monk: Well, slap me on the floor and call me mat. (slap face)

One: As he walked through the streets, he realized that this day was a Roman holiday, because the streets were filled with people who were having parties.

All: (sing and dance) "Celebrate good time, come on—It's a celebration!"

One: And the streets were filled with all kinds of entertainment.

Two: (move in front of monk---do a trick: ex. Hambone--- move back to place)

Three: (move in front of monk---do a trick: ex. Finger disappearing trick---move back to place)

Four: (move in front of monk---do a trick: ex. Stupid joke---move back to place)

One: The little monk was amazed!

Monk: Well, slap me on the wall and call me art! (slap face)

One: He didn't know anyone in Rome, and had no clue as to what God wanted him to do. (monk stumbles around / others push him around) So the little monk followed the crowd of people as they moved to a huge coliseum (monk follows others in a circle) where the gladiators competed. The little monk had never heard of the gladiator games before. He

watched as the gladiators entered the ring.

Three: (as ring announcer) In this corner, weighing 214 pounds at 3% body fat is Crusher!

Two: (flex and growl) GRRRRR

Three: And her competitor weighing 114 pounds is Twinkie. He is the son of Mr. And Mrs. (fill in last name) and enjoys long walks in the park and needle point.

Four: (strength pose and then curtsy)

One: The little monk listened as he heard the gladiators yell.

Two and Four: We who are about to die salute you.

One: This disturbed the little monk because he knew that there was going to be the shedding of blood. He watched as the gladiators began to exchange battle cries and fight.

Two: (dance around with dukes up) Yeah, you put a quarter in this juke box and you won't be dancing' (hit two).

Two: You can't hurt steel.

One: There was a large crowd who had come to watch the senseless murder of men for entertainment. As the crowd began to cheer...

Three: (step forward) Fire-cracker, fire-cracker, boom, boom, boom.

One: The little monk could sit still no longer. He jumped from his seat and yelled.

Monk: (jump forward) In the name of Christ forebear.

Four: (sissy fight with two)

Two: (go for headlock) Elbow smash! Elbow smash!

Four: (push away from two / grab sword / make light saber sounds) On guard! ZZZZZZ ZZZZZZ May the force be with you. ZZZZZZ ZZZZZZ

One: No one paid attention to the monk's puny little voice.

Monk: (wimpy sound) In the name of Christ forebear.

One: So the little monk leaped to the sandy floor of the arena and yelled.

Monk: (jump between two and four and sing) Stop! In the name of love, before you lose a part. Think it over.

One: And the gladiators continued to fight.

Two and Four: Yeah, yeah! Take that and that...

One: One of the gladiators sent the monk sprawling across the floor.

Monk: (falling) In the name of Christ forebear.

One: The crowd began to laugh, thinking it was part of the entertainment.

Three: (laugh) ha...ha...ha...

One: But the little monk began to get in the way of the gladiators and the crowds. Laughter turned to cries for the little monk's death.

Three: (cheerleading) Run him through, run him through, run him through good, unhh.

One: One of the gladiators raised his sword. (two raises his sword) The little monk let out one last cry.

Monk: (on knees) In the name of Christ forebear.

One: And the gladiator struck the little monk across the chest.

Monk: (as two strikes) In the name of Christ.... Forebear.

One: A silence fell over the stadium as the little monk lay motionless on the arena floor. The crowd watched as the gladiators dropped their swords and one by one the stadium was emptied. (two, three, and four move back into line. The competition had been defeated by one courageous little monk. (move back to group) This was the last gladiator competition in the Roman Coliseum. Never again were men killed for entertainment in the Roman Coliseum, because of one man's courage to follow God's direction.

Two: (all returning to beginning positions as line is spoken) I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way.....

Four: Be ashamed, but will have....

Three: Sufficient courage so that....

One: Whether by life or by death....

All: So be strong and courageous. Take courage! (hand out)

**Bible Reference:**

Deuteronomy 31



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