



CONFIDENCE

Values for Living—Cadet Character Development Forum

INTRODUCTION

Each Values for Living character development forum helps Civil Air Patrol members explore a virtue from multiple angles and practice that virtue through a hands-on activity. The combination of analysis and practice helps members internalize the virtue so it stays with them beyond the end of the squadron meeting.

Confidence is the assurance that comes from appreciating our skills, abilities, and gifts. Confidence empowers leaders to achieve their goals and encourage others. Like many moral virtues, confidence is a mean between extremes. Overconfidence leads to arrogance. Too little confidence leads to low self-esteem.

PRECLASS CHECKLIST

Prior preparation is essential to success. Please prepare the following well ahead of time:

- All media installed and checked out
- Phase Three cadet orientation/training completed
- Participation awards such as candy or granola bar treats available
- Room arrangements complete

ATTENTION GETTER

LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (5-10 MINUTES.)

Option 1: Video Clip from the movie *Unbroken*, the life story of Louis Zamperini

In this clip we see a young Louis Zamperini training for the High School Track team. Louis complains that he can't do it, but his older brother, Pete, assures him. Watch how Louis' confidence develops and grows. Note the role that Pete plays in encouraging that growth. [Show video clip here.]

Louis Zamperini went on to set several long-distance running records. In 1936, he became, and remains, the youngest American Olympian to compete in the 5000-meter race.

The confidence he developed while running also served him as a prisoner of war during the Second World War. By telling himself, "If you can take it, you can make it," Zamperini endured severe torture without compromising his honor.

(Video clip from the film, *Unbroken*, is provided under fair use copyright law for limited and transformative educational purpose.)

Option 2: Read this in lieu of showing the video clip

Louis Zamperini wasn't born with confidence. He wasn't like his older brother, Pete; Pete was a member of the track team and popular in school. Because Pete was concerned about his younger brother, he encouraged Louis to start running and to try out for the track team. Louis complained that he lacked natural ability, but Pete encouraged Louis to believe in himself.

When Louis wanted to quit, Pete would urge him on with this phrase: "If you can take it, you can make it." As Pete pushed him to run faster and longer, Louis learned to believe in himself, both as a runner and as a person. He discovered he could "take it" and slowly developed confidence.

Louis Zamperini went on to set several long-distance running records. He set the California high school record for the mile run. In 1963, he became the youngest American Olympian to compete in the 5000-meter race. After coming home from the Olympics, Louis set a record in 1938 for the fastest mile time by a college student.

The confidence he developed while running also served him as a prisoner of war during the Second World War. By telling himself, "If you can take it, you can make it," Zamperini endured severe torture without compromising his honor.

Option 3: Personal Story

Share a story illustrating your own growth in confidence or the difference between confidence and arrogance.

RECOGNIZING THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR

SMALL GROUP FACILITATED BY PHASE III CADET (15 MINUTES.)

- Identify a person in your life who exhibits confidence. What behaviors reveal his or her confidence?
- Do you know someone who lacks confidence? How does this person behave?
- Too much confidence leads to arrogance. What behaviors do you see in arrogant people?
- What effect does confidence have on other people? What about a lack of confidence or overconfidence?
- Who has helped you to develop your own self-confidence? How?
- Can you describe an instance in which you helped someone else develop confidence? What did you do and what effect did it have?

APPLYING THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR

LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (15 MINUTES)

- How does confidence help you live out the Core Values?
- Leaders need to develop self-awareness, including an awareness of our own perspectives. Confidence is a form of perspective because it describes the way I see myself. How do you know whether you have the right amount of confidence?
- How can you protect yourself from becoming over-confident or even arrogant?
- What would help you develop or improve your confidence?
- Last month, we learned that perspectives, like attitudes, are contagious. If confidence is a form of perspective, is confidence also contagious? Why or why not?
- What can you do to help someone who has too much confidence or too little confidence?

ACTIVITY

LED BY SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS (10-15 MINUTES.)

Option 1: Incentivizing Affirmation

For this activity, you will need a supply of small candies such as M&Ms, Skittles, or gummy bears. Please be mindful of your unit's restrictions on eating and, if necessary, adapt this activity to use non-perishable items like pens or stickers. We recommend approximately 3-5 of these items for each cadet participant.

1. Have the group form a circle and be seated.
2. Place the pile of rewards in the center of the circle and ask each member of the group to take as many as they would like, but to not eat them yet. This is the only instruction you will give them. If they ask for more information, simply say, "You will find out soon enough." Candy distribution does not need to be equal.
3. When they are done taking their candy, explain that each small group member must share one positive trait or strength about herself/himself with the group for each piece of candy taken. After sharing a positive trait, the cadet may eat one piece of the candy.

After all the cadets have shared and eaten their candy (or after five minutes), ask the following questions:

- Was it easy or difficult to identify positive things about yourself and share them with the group?
- Is it socially acceptable to share "how good we are?" Why or why not?
- How can we talk about our strengths without falling into arrogance?
- How can we help others talk about their own strengths and abilities in positive ways?

Option 2: Confidence Worksheet

Most of us will struggle if asked, "what do you do well?" We all have talents, skills, and strengths, but we rarely speak about them directly. Use the attached worksheet to explore possible sources of confidence. After the members of your small group have completed the worksheet,

ask each participant to share one or two answers and explain how those answers contribute to confidence.

Option 3: Charades

Our bodies can be outward manifestations of our attitudes. In your small group, play a few rounds of charades. Each participant should have the opportunity to perform (without speaking or writing) one of the following attitudes:

- Shyness
- Arrogance
- Fear
- Confidence
- Strength
- Eagerness
- Anger

As always, facilitators should modify this list according to the needs of their units. After each round, the small group facilitator should question the group. How were you able to guess the attitude? What physical signs gave it away?

You may have heard about the psychological benefits of “power poses.” No one has been able to duplicate the results of the original studies, but many people find such postures can relieve stress or improve confidence. Recall the physical manifestations of “confidence” from your game of charades and ask each participant to pose or act out “confidence.” The small group facilitator should decide the winner in each group and may award prizes.

LESSON SUMMARY AND WRAP-UP

LARGE GROUP FACILITATED BY CHAPLAIN/CDI/COMMANDER (2 MINUTES)

Confidence is the assurance that comes from appreciating our skills, abilities, and gifts. Your self-perception can help you live out the Core Values. Confidence requires a specific kind of integrity: honesty about our strengths and weaknesses. When we recognize our strengths, we are more eager to put them at the service of others. When we recognize our weaknesses, we can commit to addressing them in the pursuit of excellence. By having confidence in others, we treat them with respect and empower them to contribute to the team. Confidence makes us better volunteer Airmen and enables us to better serve one another, our nation, and our world.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“Believe you can and you're halfway there.” – Theodore Roosevelt

“Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.” – Proverbs 22:29

“With realization of one's own potential and self-confidence in one's ability, one can build a better world.” – The Dalai Lama

“The way to develop self-confidence is to do the thing you fear and get a record of successful experiences behind you.” – William Jennings Bryan

“If you hear a voice within you say, 'you cannot paint,' then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.” – Vincent Van Gogh



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WORKSHEET

Most of us will struggle if asked, “What do you do well?” We all have talents, skills, and strengths, but we rarely speak about them directly. Use the attached worksheet to explore possible sources of confidence.

- Something I did for someone else:

- A compliment I received recently:

- I was happy for someone else when:

- I was proud of myself when:

- A goal I achieved recently:

- Today I had fun when:

- Someone I consider a friend:

- A person I can trust:

- Today was interesting because: