

## GREECE (THEME 6)

**Sub-theme 1: Developing courage, persistence and optimism in the face of adversity and overcoming difficulties and setbacks (e.g. failure, disability, sickness, injustice, discrimination)**

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**Set of Activities 1: Dealing with difficulties (learning difficulties, failure in school, life challenges) by showing courage, persistence and optimism.**

**Set of Activities 2: Dealing with disability and sickness by showing courage, persistence and optimism.**

**Set of Activities 3: Dealing with injustice, discrimination by showing courage, persistence and optimism.**

**Set 1: Dealing with difficulties (learning difficulties, failure in school, life challenges) by showing courage, persistence and optimism**

### Learning Goals

By the end of this unit, children will be able to:

- Understand that everybody can face difficulties to a small or larger degree during our life and that is part of life.

**Tips for Teachers**

- Recognize and verbalize possible feeling which make one feel uncomfortable caused by difficulties such as anger, frustration, sadness or sense of helplessness.
- Understand that it is normal to experience feelings which make one uncomfortable when somebody faces a difficulty.
- Be able to focus on the positive things a person can do.
- Be able to show courage, persistence and optimism in the face of adversity.

## Activity 1: “The rabbit and the turtle”

### *Learning Goal*

Children will understand how they can show courage, persistence in the face of adversity.

*Learning Outcome. By the end of this study unit, I will be able to show courage and persistence in the face of adversity.*

- Understand that everybody can have a kind of difficulty and that is normal.
- Recognize that feelings which arise in the face of difficulties can arise feelings such as anger, frustration, sadness, disappointment, sense of helplessness, sense of injustice and affirm to students that these emotions are expected and are somehow normal to be experience when an individual faces adversity and difficulties in life.

### *Age Group*

Early Years

### *Level*

Basic

### *Materials needed*

Book with Aesop’s Fable: “The Rabbit and the Turtle”

## Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson by making a small introduction to the subject of adversity and how we can face adversity by showing courage, persistence and optimism.

2. Read the story

One day a rabbit was boasting about how fast he could run. He was laughing at the turtle for being so slow. Much to the rabbit's surprise, the turtle challenged him to a race. The rabbit thought this was a good joke and accepted the challenge. The fox was to be the umpire of the race. As the race began, the rabbit raced way ahead of the turtle, just like everyone thought. The rabbit got to the halfway point and could not see the turtle anywhere. He was hot and tired and decided to stop and take a short nap. Even if the turtle passed him, he would be able to race to the finish line ahead of him. All this time the turtle kept walking step by step by step. He never quit no matter how hot or tired he got. He just kept going. However, the rabbit slept longer than he had thought and woke up. He could not see the turtle anywhere! He went at full-speed to the finish line but found the turtle there waiting for him.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them: (list of potential conversation questions)

- What did you think of this story?
- What is the basic difficulty of the turtle?
- What is the strong characteristic of the rabbit?
- How do you think turtle feels about herself?
- What did you think the rabbit feels about himself?
- What makes rabbit to loss the race?
- How do you think the turtle felt before the race?
- What words did the turtle may have said to herself in order to feel strong?
- What characterists of the turtle help win and it determine the race?

✓ *At this point we want to focus on the courage, persistence and optimism the turtle showed and on the fact that she didn't give up. These are the key components of dealing effectively with difficulties and help the turtle to win the race.*

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences: (Proposed questions)

- Is there something about yourself that makes you uncorfortable or troubles you?
- How do you felt about that?
- Have you ever done something to deal with this personal difficulty?
- Did you talk to somebody about that situation?
- Did you do anything to change this situation (difficulty/personal challenge)?

- What are some things that may give you courage and help you fight adversity in life?

✓ *At this point we want to focus on the feeling of anger, frustration, sadness or incompetence that a difficulty can cause to everybody and stress the fact that all these emotions are normal and understandable due to the unpleasant situation.*

1. Ask pupils to draw the scene of the story they like most.

Also ask them to think one positive thought that the turtle may had before or during the race (e.g. "I will do my best", "I will not give up", "I will reach the end no matter what"). Then we ask each pupil to tell us the sentence they thought and we write it down in a bubble thought above the turtle they have drawn.

## Activity 2: "The rabbit and the turtle"

### Age Group

Early Years

### Level

Intermediate

### Materials needed

Book with Aesop's Fable: "The Rabbit and the Turtle"

### Activity Steps

Steps 1-4: Same as Activity 1.

5. Split the children into groups of 6-7 pupils and ask them to think some encouraging and optimistic words (self-talk) that the turtle may says to herself before and during the race.

In case the pupils have difficulty to find ideas, here are some examples: "I will fight with all my strengths", "I will give my best self", "My goal will be to finalize, no matter how much time will take", "I will not give up even if the rabbit will be close to the end", "I will enjoy the fight, no matter the result", "I will be happy if I manage to be a little bit faster than the previous time I run".

6. Then ask each group to present their ideas in front of the class.

### Activity 3: “The rabbit and the turtle”

#### Age Group

Early Years

#### Level

Advance

#### Materials needed

Book with Aesop’s Fable: “The Rabbit and the Turtle”

#### Activity Steps

Steps 1-4: Same as Activity 1.

5. Split the children into groups of 6-7 pupils and distribute roles (turtle, rabbit, fox) to each child. At this point we can add to the story 3-4 new heroes who are turtle’s friends and they attend the race. Then we ask all the children of the class to help the child whose role is the turtle to think and write some encouraging and optimistic words that the turtle may say to herself, before and during the race. Here are some examples: *“I will fight with all my strengths”, “I will give my best self”, “My goal will be to finish, no matter how much time will take”, “I will not give up even if the rabbit will be close to the end”, “I will enjoy the fight, no matter the result”, “I will be happy if I manage to be a little bit faster than the previous time I run”.*

Next, we ask pupils to think of some encouraging ideas that the turtle’s friends may have shared with her in order to give her courage.

6. Finally, ask each group to role play (enact) the story in front of the class. Remind our heroes (turtle and rabbit) to think aloud in order everybody hears the positive thoughts of the turtle. Also we ask turtle’s friends to call encouraging comment to the turtle before and during the race: *“Don’t give up” “We are with you”, “Be strong”, “You are the winner”* etc.

### Activity 4: “The rabbit and the turtle”

### ***Age Group***

Early Primary

### ***Level***

Basic

### ***Materials needed***

Book with Aesop's Fable: "The Rabbit and the Turtle"

### ***Activity Steps***

Same as Activity 3 (Early Years Advanced)

## **Activity 5: "Jim never gets an A"**

### ***Age Group***

Early Primary

### ***Level***

Intermediate

### ***Materials needed***

Index Cards

### ***Activity Steps***

1. Start the lesson by making a small introduction to the subject of adversity in life as part of life's path and how we can deal with adversity by showing courage, persistence and optimism.

2. Read the story

Jim is a student of third grade. He likes school a lot but he has some difficulties in learning. Jim has difficulty in memorizing dictation, grammar rules, multiplication table, history etc. Also he has difficulties in expressing himself in writing. Sometimes he feels very disappointed, because he studies a lot but he cannot show to the teacher and to his classmates that he had studied. Everybody thinks that he never studies at home and he cannot get a "well done" from the teacher.

Every time the teacher says: “Jim you need to study more” Jim feels very sad, but after some time he says to himself: “My teacher is right, I need to study harder”. Everybody knows that Jim is not a good student but they don’t know that Jim is a big fighter that tries a lot and never gives up.

Every noon Jim gets a nap because he knows that a nap makes him feel fresh and helps him to have more energy to study. He studies many hours even if many times feel tired and frustrated. Every time Jim has a test he starts prepares him many days before, in order to have a lot of time to do as many rehearsals as possible. He never gets an A. Every time he gets a B- or a C, he feels really frustrated and sad. It helps him very much when his parents say positive, encouraging words to him. Then he has practice to focus on the things he is really good. All these strategies help him to feel better and gave him power to keep on trying. One day he had a dream. He saw himself holding a test with a big A. Nobody could understand the happiness he felt. From that day on, he decided to try even harder. He asked his mother to hire a tutor at home and the mother promised to ask for a support teacher at school to help him to develop memorizing skills and to practice writing. Jim’ parents always have encouraged him and supported his attempts to deal and fight every difficult situation and adversity in life. Jim improved on a daily basis but it was important this his family understood the tough struggle he was giving on a daily basis.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them: (Suggested questions)

- What impress you from the story?
- What are the basic difficulties of Jim?
- How these difficulties make him feel?
- What are the positive characteristic of him?
- What make Jim feel better after failure?
- Think some of the encouraging words Jim’s parents say to him
- Think some of the things that Jim is doing well in his life
- How hard is for Jim to keep trying even he knows he may fail again?
- What words may Jim say to himself in order to feel better?
- What are the actions that Jim take in order to deal with his difficulties?
- What makes Jim to try even harder?
- What are the characteristic of Jim that it’s worth somebody to have?

✓ *At this point we want to focus on the courage, persistence and optimism the Jim showed and focus on the fact that he didn’t give up. These are the key components of dealing effectively with difficulty and help Jim to keep trying.*

4. Next relate the story to the children’s own experiences:

- Is there any characteristic of you that you do not feel well or troubles you?
- How do you feel about that?
- Have you ever done something to deal with this difficulty?
- Did you talk to somebody about this difficulty?
- Have you done something to change this situation?
- Is there anything that may give you courage and helps you fighting with life's difficulties?

✓ *At this point we want to focus on the feeling of anger, frustration, sadness or incompetence (or sense of helplessness) that a difficulty can cause to everybody and stress the fact that all these emotions are normal and understandable due to the unpleasant situation.*

5. Next ask each child to make a small personal card. In one side of the card they will write 3-4 things that are difficult to do (e.g. memorize multiplication table, learn dictation, memorize words in a foreigner language, etc.). In the other side, ask students to write some mottos that may give children courage and help them every time they feel disappointed. We encourage children to write mottos like: *"I am a fighter", "I will never give up", "I will find ways to deal with my difficulties", "It's hard, but I will keep on trying", "I am a strong person who knows how to fight" etc.*

## Activity 6: "Jim never gets an A"

### Age Group

Early Primary

### Level

Advance

### Materials needed

Index Cards

### Activity Steps

Steps 1-4: same as Activity 5

5. Split pupils into groups of 3-4 children and ask them to reflect and write down sentences about people (children) or situations which may have given them



courage. Also write down sentences which show persistence and optimism. Then ask each group to present their ideas in front of the whole class.

6. Give pupils colorful hard paper and ask them to draw and cut a big **POC-KET**, which is an acronym for the kids to remember these three important words (P for Persistence, O for Optimism, C for Courage). Then ask them to make (by paper) 3 precious stones to put into the **POC-KET**. In each stone they must write down the words P for Persistence, O for Optimism, C for Courage. Then glue the paper stones with the three words on the **POC-KET**.

## Activity 7: “Jim never gets an A”

### *Age Group*

Late Primary

### *Level*

Basic

### *Materials needed*

Index Cards

### *Activity Steps*

Same as Activity 6

## Activity 8: “Crossing the bridge”

### *Age Group*

Late Primary

### *Level*

Intermediate

### *Materials needed*

Photos provided below



### *Activity Steps*

1. Start the lesson by making a small introduction to the subject of adversity and how we can face adversity by showing courage, persistence and optimism.
2. Next show pupils the first photo and ask them to make comments on it. Then provide the following information: These children are from Indonesia and they cross this bridge every day in order to go to school. It is really dangerous to cross this bridge and their parents really worry about children's safety.
3. Ask children to think about the personality characteristics of these children in the photo should have in order to deal with this daily adversity.
4. Ask children to think what are children's sources of courage (e.g. family, teacher, friend support). Then ask children to share their thoughts in front of class.
5. Give pupils colorful hard paper and ask them to draw and cut a big **POC-KET**, which is an acronym for the kids to remember these three important words (P for Persistence, O for Optimism, C for Courage). Then ask them to make (by paper) 3 precious stones to put into the **POC-KET**. In each stone they must write down the words P for Persistence, O for Optimism, C for Courage. Then glue the paper stones with the three words on the **POC-KET**.

## Activity 9: "Crossing the bridge"

### *Age Group*

Late Primary

### *Level*

Advanced

### *Materials needed*

Two photos provided

### *Activity Steps*

Steps 1-4: same as activity 8

5. Ask children to comment on the second photo.
6. Provide to the children the information that the second bridge is the new bridge that local people made in order children to go school with safety. Here the teacher needs to stress the fact that the children's persistence and desire to go to school and

dealing with this daily adversity (crossing dangerous bridge), brought the desired results and the new bridge has been built.

7. Ask children to think what made city officials decide to make this new bridge.

8. Split children into group of 4-5 and ask them to think what thing may want to change (maybe in school life) and their courage and persistence may help them to manage it.

## Set 2: Dealing with disability by showing courage persistence and optimism

### Activity 1: “I am a special person”

#### *Age Group*

Early Years

#### *Level*

Basic

#### *Materials needed*

Manual, sheets of paper

#### *Activity Steps*

1. Start the lesson by making a small introduction to the subject of adversity and how we can face adversity by showing courage, persistence and optimism.

2. Read the story

Max a happy mouse who loves to explore and play. One day he felt it was the right time go around the world to make his dreams come true. He said good bye to his family and he started his journey. Max had a tremendous difficulty though. Walking was not easy for him since one of his legs was shorter than the other. This made kind of awkward to walk and he could not go really fast. For this predicament

(difficulty) nobody was a fault. He was born this way. This adversity though did bring his spirits down as he knew he had a strong and sharp mind and he could find solutions to his problems. Suddenly, an idea lit in his mind. He made a wooden sole and he glued under his shoe so he gained more height so he can walk ore comfortably. While walking in the forest, met Paco, a mole (dormouse) who he could not see very well. But Paco had a very strong sense of smell and he can even smell under earth. Also Paco has been using a cane to find his way around.

Max, the mouse proposed to Paco to come along his journey around the forrest and Paco agreed. Max kept Paco's hand and helped him to find his way. On their way, they met Freddy the frog who was a little deaf, but he can really jump as high as one tall tree. They asked him to come along. He agreed and all 3 walked together. As they all were strolling along they met Terry the hedgehog, who was afraid of many things and he was a bit shy but he could be a fantastic guard if need be with his strong and powerful thorns. All together became a happy group of friends. Suddenly thunder strikes and the sky becomes gloomy. A huge heavy storm was coming their way! They had to move fast. They moved quickly to find a shelter for protection. Max the mouse along with Freddy the frog run fast and located a small crack in rock, big enough for all to sit in safe. As they located their shelter, they all worked together to collect leaves and branches to make the shelter dry and safe and to collect lots of food for the rainy days.

They all worked had but at the end the shelter was done and everybody sat to rest a bit. Tired but happy they all understood something really important: Each of them was different but also special, each of them had a weakness or disadvantage in life but they all could find solutions to move on and enjoy life and help with making the shelter better. They also understood the power of friendship and relationships. Without this collaboration the shelter could not have been completed. It was a great day for all them!

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- What did you think about the story?
- What is the basic difficulty/disability of each animal?
- What is the strong characteristic of each animal?



- How Max feels about himself?
- What helps Max see his disability in a positive way?
- What helps the heroes of the story to see their disability in a positive way?
  - What was the conclusion the heroes came up at the end of the story?

Here we may want to bring into the conversation, questions about the fact that the relationship (friendship) the animals built among themselves, helped deal with their adversity and problem solve better

✓ *At this point we want to focus on the courage, persistence and optimism all heroes showed and on the fact that they all see themselves in a positive way. These are the key components of dealing effectively with difficulty.*

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Is there any characteristic of yourself that makes you uncomfortable or trouble you?
- How do you feel about that?
- Have you ever done something to deal with this difficulty?
- Have you talked to anybody about that difficulty?
- Have you done anything to change that difficulty?
- Is there anything that gives you courage and helps you fight an adversity you may face?

✓ *At this point we want to focus on the feeling of anger, frustration, sadness or incompetence that a difficulty can cause to everybody and stress the fact that all these emotions are normal and understandable due to the unpleasant situation.*

5. Then ask pupils to think one thing that they are good at and draw themselves in doing this.

## Activity 2: "I am a special person"

### Age Group

Early Years

### Level

Intermediate

### **Materials needed**

Manual, index cards

### **Activity Steps**

Steps 1-4: same as Activity 1.

5. Ask pupils to think 2-3 things they are good at and then help each child to make a sentence for him/her such as : "I cannot do hiking but I can do biking, swimming and walking fast". Also ask pupils to combine each sentence they say with body language and facial expressions (e.g. I cannot do: feeling sad, I can: feeling happy). Moreover ask them to move their body 180 degrees each time they say "but".

## **Activity 3: "I am a special person"**

### **Age Group**

Early Years

### **Level**

Advance

### **Materials needed**

Manual, cards with mottos

### **Activity Steps**

Steps 1-4: same as Activity 2.

5. Split class into 4 groups and give each group a card and read to them one of the following mottos: 1. *"I accept myself as it is"*, 2. *"I love myself as it is"*, 3. *"There are things that I cannot change but there are other things that I can change"*, 4. *"I need to focus on the things I can do"*. Then ask each group to memorize its motto and repeat it loud, 2-3 times, in front of the whole class. Finally, ask one group after other to repeat the motto again with passion.

## **Activity 4: "I am a special person"**

### *Age Group*

Early Primary

### *Level*

Basic

### *Materials needed*

Manual, cards with mottos

### *Activity Steps*

Same as Activity 3.

## Activity 5: “Bocelli: a special person”

### *Age Group*

Early Primary

### *Level*

Intermediate

### *Materials needed*

Manual, song by Bocelli (Italian singer) "[Time to Say Goodbye](#)".

### *Activity Steps*

1. Play a song "Time to Say Goodbye" by Andrea Bocelli. Ask pupils if they like the song and how they feel when they listen this song. Then explain that the album's first single, "Time to Say Goodbye", topped charts across Europe, where it stayed at the top of the charts for fourteen consecutive weeks, breaking the all-time sales record, with over 3 million copies sold in the country. The single went on to sell over 12 million copies worldwide, making it one of the best-selling singles of all time.

2. Then say the story of the singer A. Bocelli:

**Andrea Bocelli**, is an Italian tenor, and singer-songwriter, who was born with poor eyesight and he became blind at the age of twelve following a football accident. He and his family lived on the family farm, selling farm machinery and making wine in the small village in Tuscany, Italy. As a young boy, Bocelli showed a great passion for music. His mother has said that music was the only thing that would comfort him. At



the age of six, he started piano lessons, and later also learned to play the flute, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, guitar and drums and after a while he realized that pursuing the career of a tenor was his destiny. By seven, he was already able to recognize the famous voices of the time as well as tried to emulate the great interpreters. He gave his first concert in a small village not far from where he was born and at the age of 14, he won his first song competition. After finishing secondary school in 1980, he studied law at the University of Pisa. To earn money, Bocelli performed evenings in piano bars. He completed law school and spent one year as a court-appointed lawyer. It was there, in 1987, that he met his future wife, Enrica. Bocelli has recorded fourteen solo studio albums, of both pop and classical music, three greatest hits albums, and nine complete operas, selling over 80 million records worldwide. In 1998, he was named one of People Magazine's 50 Most Beautiful People. With the release of his classical album, *Sacred Arias*, Bocelli captured a listing in the Guinness Book of World Records, as he simultaneously held the top 3 positions on the US Classical Albums charts.

3. Ask pupils what impressed the most from the life story of Bocelli.
  4. Split into group of 4-5 and ask them to write down the difficulties Bocelli may have faced in his life.
  5. Ask pupils to share their ideas in class. Then ask if they have heard other stories of people who have any kind of disability. We may also refer to Hellen Keller's story.
- ✓ *At this point we want to focus on the feeling of anger, frustration, sadness or incompetence that a disability may cause to everybody and stress the fact that all these emotions are normal and understandable due to this difficult situation.*

## Activity 6: "Bocelli: a special person"

### **Age Group**

Early Primary

### **Level**

Advanced

### **Materials needed**

Manual, song by Bocelli (Italian singer) "[Time to Say Goodbye](#)".

### **Activity Steps**

Steps 1-6 same as Activity 5

6. Ask pupils to think some positive thoughts that may help individuals with disability like Bocelli deal with their disability (adversity)

Who may help them to feel better?

What skills or who may help somebody to develop a positive attitude toward disability?

7. Ask students to reflect that a person with a disability has 2 basic choices (paths):

- a. The path of despair and helplessness (and quit) or
- b. The path of acceptance of disability and move into creative action to live with it (metamorphosis)

8. Then ask what does a person has to have with him in his backpack in order to take second path of acceptance?

9. Ask children to draw two paths and write down in one path the word despair and in the other the word *acceptance (or Greek work "metamorphosis" (change into something new and positive).*

Next, ask students to draw how they imagine the place where the path of despair leads and how they imagine the place where the path of acceptance leads.

Finally, comment on the children's drawings.

## Activity 7: "Bocelli: a special person"

### **Age Group**

Late Primary

### **Level**

Basic

### **Materials needed**

Manual,

### **Activity Steps**

Same as Activity 6

## Activity 8: “Nick: life without limits”

### Age Group

Late Primary

### Level

Intermediate

### Materials needed

Manual,

### Activity Steps

1. Play a video from YOUTUBE in which Nick Vojegic talks about his life. (we will add information the internet address to find the videos)
2. Ask pupils to share anything they want concerning the video.
3. Ask pupils to think and discuss some of the feelings Nick may have experienced from the beginning of his ordeal and until he accepted his adversity (disability) and made it into something positive for him and the people around him.
4. Ask students to reflect that a person with a disability has two basic choices (paths):
  - a. The path of despair and helplessness (and quit) or
  - b. The path of acceptance of disability, a path which leads into creative action metamorphosing the disability into something positive afterall.
5. Then ask what does a person has to have with him in his backpack in order to take second path of acceptance?
6. Ask children to draw two paths and write down in one path the word despair and in the other the word acceptance. Then ask them to draw how they imagine the place where the path of despair leads and how they imagine the place where the path of acceptance leads. Encourage children to write down any words that come to their mind in each path. For example, in the path of despair: *sadness, feeling of incompetence (and helplessness)* and in the path of acceptance: *I love myself, I will find my way, I am a special person* etc. Then discuss the children’s drawings.

## Activity 9: “Nick”: life without limits”

### **Age Group**

Late Primary

### **Level**

Advanced

### **Materials needed**

Manual,

### **Activity Steps**

Steps 1-5: same steps as activity 8.

6. Then split pupils into groups and distribute them one card to each group. Each card will have one saying by Nick: 1. *“There are some things you cannot change and other things you can change”*, 2. *“You need to see where the obstacle is”*, 3. *“Visualize yourself overcome obstacles”*, 4. *“Focus on the positive things you do”*, 5. *“Using everything you can do”*, 6. *“Use the best of your ability”*, 7. *“Never give up”*.

7. Ask each group to reflect on each saying and share their thoughts in class.